WITH THE MOVIE MAKERS

JOHN AMID

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WITH THE MOVIE MAKERS

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GETTING READY TO TAKE A SCENE "ON LOCATION."

The camera men preparing their cameras while the director is coaching the actors in their parts. Because the scene is to be a "long shot," the two cameras are put on a platform to secure greater elevation.

WITH THE MOVIE MAKERS

Stearns, Myron Morris

BY

JOHN AMID (pseud.)

WITH FIFTY-ONE ILLUSTRATIONS FROM FAMOUS STUDIOS AND FROM THE AUTHOR'S OWN PRODUCTIONS

BOSTON
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With The Movie Makers

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FOREWORD

Motion pictures are still changing so much, in their development from year to year, that any survey of this vast, chaotic new industry is in danger of being out-of-date long before its time. With this in mind, I have attempted to stress those phases of movie-making, and of the story-telling that underlies each photoplay, that do not change. A generation hence, the fundamental problems confronting the makers—how to show real people, doing interesting things in interesting places—will be the same.

Grateful acknowledgment is due Walter P. McGuire, of "The American Boy," where much of the material embodied in this book first appeared in article form, for his assistance in planning the original articles, as well as in editorial supervision of the work as it progressed. If there is good entertainment, as

well as instructive value, in these pages, and interest for old minds as well as young ones, much of the credit is due to him.

JOHN AMID.

August 23rd, 1923.

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WITH THE MOVIE MAKERS

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CHAPTER I

HOW DO YOU WATCH MOVIES?

GROVER CLEVELAND was a great fisherman. Once, after he was famous and President, some one asked him what he did, all those hours he spent, waiting so patiently for the fish to bite.

"Oh," he is reported to have answered, "sometimes I sit and think, and other times I just sit."

That's the way most of us watch motion pictures—with the accent on the sit.

We don't use our brains enough, where the movies are concerned, either in the selection of pictures to go to see, or in analyzing—and appreciating or criticizing—what we see.

How often do you watch motion pictures?

Do you know anything about how they're made? And who makes the best ones? And

how they do it? And why they are better. And how you can tell them? And what it means in your life to see good ones—or bad ones?

More than twenty years ago, at a Yale-Harvard football game in New Haven, Harvard got the ball somewhere near midfield, in the second half, and hammered away towards the Yale goal. It was a cold, rainy day, with gray skies overhead and mud underfoot. Harvard weighed more, and was better trained, and had better men. From the very first they had the better of it; early in the game they plowed through to two touchdowns, while lumps came into the throats of the draggled Yale thousands, looking helplessly down from the great packed bleachers.

Then came that march down the field in the second half, with the rain falling again, and the players caked with mud until you couldn't tell Red from Blue, and the last hopes of the Yale rooters sinking lower and lower.

But as Harvard pounded and plowed and splashed past midfield—half a yard, three yards, two yards, half a yard again—(five yards to a first down in those heartbreaking

days) the cheering for that beaten, broken, plucky, fighting eleven swelled into a solid roar of encouragement and sympathy. It rose past the cheer leaders—ignored them; old grads and undergrads, and boys who wouldn't reach Yale for years to come. Yale—Yale—Yale—over and over again, and then the famous Brek-ek-ek-ek! Co-ex! Co-ex!—rolling back again into the Nine Long Yales. All the way from midfield they kept it up, without a break or waver—there in the rain and the face of defeat—all the way down to the goal—and across it. Loyalty!

Another game. Yale-Princeton this time, with Yale ahead, all the way. And at the very end of the game, with the score twenty or more to nothing against them, those Princeton men gritted their teeth and dug in, holding Yale for downs with just half a yard to go! And on the stands the Princeton cohorts, standing up with their hats off, singing that wonderful chant of defeat:

"Her sons—will give—
While they—shall—live—
Three cheers—for old—Nassau!"

Great!

But what of it? And what has it to do with motion pictures?

Just this. Each person, of all the thousands watching those games, was impressed.

Could not help but be. Few will ever forget all of what they saw, or all of what they felt. Something of the loyalty of the Yale stands, the fighting spirit of that dauntless Princeton eleven, became a part of each spectator.

Do you *get* it?

It's the things that we see, the things that we hear, the things that we read, the things that we feel and do, that taken together make us, in large measure, what we are. Yes, the movies among the rest.

Every time we go to a loosely played baseball game, and see perhaps some center-fielder, standing flat-footed because he thinks he's been cheated of a better position, muff an unimportant fly—we're that much worse off. We don't realize it, and of course taken all alone one impression doesn't necessarily mean much of anything, but when it comes to our turn at the

middle garden, it'll be just that much simpler to slack down—and take things easy. And every time we see c. f. on a snappy nine, playing right on his toes, turn and race after a liner that looks like a home run, and lunge into the air for it as it streaks over his shoulder, and stab it with one hand and the luck that seems to stick around waiting for a good try, and hold it, and perhaps save the game with a sensational catch—why, we're that much better ball-players ourselves, for the rest of our lives.

It's a fact. An amazing, appalling, commonplace fact. But still a fact, and so one of the things you can't get away from. The things we hear, the things we do, the things we see, make us what we are.

Take stories. The fellow who reads a raft of wishy-washy stories, until he gets so that he doesn't care about any other kind particularly, becomes a wishy-washy sort of chap himself. On the other hand, too much of the "dime-novel" stuff is just as bad, with its distorted ideas and ideals. Twenty-five years ago, the Frank Merriwell stories, a nickel a week, were all the thing, and sometimes it seemed to many

a boy unfair foolishness that Father and Mother were so against reading them. But Father and Mother knew best, as those same boys will admit to-day. Too much of that sort of thing is as bad for a fellow as a diet of all meat and no vegetables. Wishy-washy, sentimental books can be compared to meals that are all custard and blanc mange.

To watch first-class motion pictures (when you can find them) is like reading worth-while stories. They tell us, show us, as often as not, places that are interesting, and different from the parts of the world we live in. They bring all people, and all times, before us on the screen. But the poor pictures that we see twist out of shape our ideas of people and life; they show things that are not and could not be true, they gloss over defects of character that a fellow should—that a regular fellow will—face squarely. A clothing-store-dummy "hero" does things that no decent scout would do—and we're just as much hurt by watching him on the screen as we would be by watching that flat-footed center fielder on the losing baseball team.

Courtesy W. W. Hodkinson Corporation.

MAKING USE OF A "REAL" INCIDENT.

In this scene, taken at the edge of the Mississippi, the young hero has just missed the old ferry, from which the pictures are being taken. He was unfamiliar with the machine he was driving, and nearly went to the bottom of the river. The scenario was changed to make use of this mishap.

Courtesy W. W. Hodkinson Corporation.

THE SCENE THE AUDIENCES SAW.

In the preceding illustration the cameras that took this picture are shown. But on the screen only what was included inside the "camera angle," as shown here, appears.

Why are the Bill Hart pictures about the best of the so-called "Westerns" of the last seven or eight years? Isn't it because on the whole Bill Hart has played the sort of chap that is most worth while—with courage, kindness, and loyalty, and ability to control his temper and do the right thing?

Only, did you ever stop to wonder how it happened that so often Bill Hart's "hero" was a bandit or train-robber or outlaw? If the fellow Hart played had really been as good as he made out, would he have been robbing or killing so many times? At least, it's worth thinking about. And in one of Hart's Westerns the hero had to ride a horse over a twenty-foot bank—almost a cliff—to get away from his pursuers. It made you wonder how they could "pull a stunt" like that without too much risk. It looked as though both horse and rider were hurt.—As a matter of fact, the horse actually broke a leg, and had to be shot. Nobody seemed to think there was anything out of the way about that—merely killing one horse to get a good picture. But how does it strike you?

Of course, that horse incident is an unusual

one, but there are hundreds of interesting problems that come up in the making of motion pictures nowadays. Pictures are one of the things that week by week are making us the fellows we are—oughtn't we to know something about them?

In one year, according to the government tax paid on box-office admissions, nearly $800,000,000 worth of photoplay tickets were bought. That means more than $2,000,000 a day paid to see motion pictures If the admissions averaged about twenty cents apiece, that means some 10,000,000 people a day watching the movies—getting their amusement and instruction, good or bad, and their impressions, good or bad, that go to determine what sort of people they will be, and what sort of a nation, twenty years from now, the United States will be.

What about it? Isn't it a pretty important thing for us to know something about the best movies, and the worst, and why they are the best, or the worst? And how they might be better?—So that we can encourage the right films, and censure the ones that ought to be

censured, and do it intelligently, playing our part in improving one of the biggest influences that this country or any other has ever seen? For surely we all know that if we can avoid the photoplays that aren't worth while, they will be just that much less profitable for the men who make them, and the pictures that we do see, that are worth while (if we can tell which ones they are, and recommend them to our friends after we've seen them), will have just that much more chance to live and show a profit and drive out the poorer specimens and get more worth while pictures made.

One of Marshal Neilan's pictures was called "Dinty." It told the story of a little newsboy in San Francisco. It contained a lot of cleverness and a lot of laughs; for instance, Dinty had a string tied to his alarm clock, that wound around the alarm as it went off, and tipped a flatiron off the stove, and the weight of the flatiron yanked a rope that pulled the covers off Dinty.—Then, on the other hand, there was a lot of stuff in it that was not so good.

Now, when you saw that picture, if you did, could you tell what was good and what was not

so good, and why the poorer part was poor? If you could tell that, you're in a position to profit most from such pictures as you see, and get the least possible harm. Also, you can help the whole game along by intelligent comment and criticism, and enthusiasm for the right thing.

Of course, you can get some fun out of watching a picture as a two-year-old watches a spinning top, but you can get a lot more if you use your brains. Try it.

CHAPTER II

TRICK STUFF

Motion pictures are not only important; they are fascinating. There's a glamor that surrounds the whole industry. Think of starting out at daybreak—three big autos full of people, and a whole cavalcade on horseback as well—to stage a "real sham battle" between cowboys and Indians!—Think of all the interesting results that can be secured, with the use of a little ingenuity and knowledge of the amazing things that a camera will do!

Haven't you ever wondered, when watching moving pictures, why this or that was so, how that or this was done? Whether or not a real person had to make that dive off the cliff—or perhaps why, in some color pictures, there are sudden unaccountable blotches of color, yellow or red, perhaps green?

For instance, you have noticed, probably, in news reels and so on, how fast marching men always walk? A regiment comes past at the quickstep—almost at a run. Yet obviously, when the picture was taken, the men were marching along steadily enough, at a swinging stride that would set your pulse throbbing.

There are two reasons for that: one is a fairly normal convention that has become firmly established in motion-picture theaters, and that has nothing whatever—or at least practically nothing—to do with the taking of the picture. The other concerns the camera man or director in charge, and is a plain matter of judgment, good or bad.

You have probably seen strips of the celluloid ribbon, with little holes along the sides, that they call motion-picture "film." It's about an inch wide, and the little pictures run crosswise, sixteen of them to the foot of film. When the camera man turns the little crank of his motion-picture camera twice around, it carries a foot of film past the lens of the camera. Sixteen exposures. Ordinarily, the speed of this cranking is one second for the two turns—one foot of

film, or sixteen exposures, per second; sixty feet a minute.

When the film is developed and a print made for exhibition, it is run through the projecting machine of a theater: if it were run at the rate of a foot a second, sixty feet a minute, the figures on the screen would move just as fast as they did in real life when the picture was taken —no faster and no slower.

But the custom has grown up of running film through the projecting machines faster than the film was run through the camera. Instead of being run sixty feet a minute, it is usually clicked along at the rate of seventy feet or more a minute. Seventy-two feet or more a minute is called "normal speed" for projection. So that on the screen everything happens about one-fifth faster than it did in real life, and frequently even faster than that—much faster, since more and more there is a tendency to "speed up" still further, until the feet of marching men in the news reels almost dance along the street, and their knees snap back and forth like mad.

Of course, you see more in a minute, watch-

ing in a theater where film is run through the projection machine so fast—but what you see is distorted, instead of being quite so much of the real thing, as would be the case if it were run more slowly. Probably on the whole it would be better if the convention of "speeding up" the projection machines were done away with, and all film ordinarily run at only the actual speed of real life—except where there happened to be some special reason for hurrying it along.

Then—the other way of making things happen on the screen faster than they do in real life. For instance, when one automobile is chasing another, and turns a corner so fast it almost makes you jump out of your seat—the hind wheels slewing around so dizzily it seems as though the whole thing would surely go in the ditch.

That's done by what is called "Slow Cranking." The director, we will say, wants to show an automobile crossing in front of the Lightning Express, with only half a second to spare. If he were really to send the auto with its driver and passengers across the track just in

time to escape the flying cowcatcher, it would be too terrible a risk. So they "slow down" the action. Instead of crashing along at sixty or seventy miles an hour the train is held down to a mere crawl—say ten miles an hour, so that it could be stopped short, if necessity arose, in time to avoid an accident. The auto would cross the tracks at a correspondingly slow gait. And the camera man, instead of cranking his film at normal speed, two turns to a second, would slow down to a single turn in three seconds, or thereabouts. That would mean it would take six seconds for one foot of film to pass the lens of the camera, instead of the usual second. So that when the picture appears on the screen, projected at normal speed, we should see in one second what actually occurred in six seconds; the train traveling at ten miles an hour would hurry past, on the screen, at sixty; the automobile bumping cautiously over the tracks in low speed or intermediate, at six or seven miles an hour, would flash past the approaching cowcatcher at somewhere around forty.

In comedies, this trick of "slow cranking"

has been used until it has grown rather tiresome, unless done with some new effect or with real cleverness. Autos have zigzagged around corners, or skidded in impossible circles, men have climbed like lightning to the tops of telegraph poles, and nursemaids have run baby-carriages along sidewalks at racetrack speed until we are a little inclined to yawn when we see one of the old stunts coming off again.

But there are always legitimate uses of slow cranking—as in the case of the train and the automobile.

At one time a company was filming an episode that occurs in the story of a cross-country automobile tour. In the story, the girl, who is driving to the Pacific Coast with her father, stops the machine and gives a lift to a tramp. This tramp proves to be a bad man, and decides to hold up the defenseless girl and her invalid father. He is standing on the running-board, beside the wheel, and threatens to turn the car over the steep embankment at the side of road if the girl doesn't do just as he says. This keeps her from slowing down, or giving any signal for help to machines that pass in the

Courtesy W. W. Hodkinson Corporation.

ROPING AN AUTO BANDIT.

According to moving-picture custom, this "action" was posed for the "still," or publicity photograph. The photoplay shows the scene described on page 28.

Courtesy W. W. Hodkinson Corporation.

TAKING "CLOSE-UPS" ON A MOVING AUTO.

In order to have the background in motion, it is necessary to have both actor and camera travelling forward at the same speed, as shown above. Note the mountains in the background. The company travelled more than two thousand miles to secure this "location." (See page 29).

opposite direction. The tramp evidently means what he says, and would be able to jump safely off as he sent the car smashing to destruction. It would look like a mere accident, and with the girl and her father killed nothing could very well be proved.

But at the last moment, along comes The Boy, who is following the girl in a smart little roadster, and sees what is happening. He takes a chance and drives alongside the larger car, makes a lasso of his tow-rope and yanks the bad man off the running-board, spilling him in the road.

Fair enough. But how are you going to make a picture of that, with close-ups and everything?

By slow cranking.

The camera is put on a platform projecting in front of a third automobile. This car follows after the other two, "shooting" the action from the rear, as the hero yanks the tramp from the running board of the girl's car. For close-up shots of the faces, to bring out the emotions and drama of the action, the camera is put on one machine or the other as needed,

taking pictures that show only the tramp, or the girl and her father, or all three—or, on the little roadster, the boy hero.

You can see how important the slow cranking is, when you take the point of view of the tramp —who of course is really no tramp at all, but a very daring and probably well-paid actor. Imagine yourself acting the part; standing on the running-board of a moving machine, you are yanked backwards by some one on another machine traveling alongside. You have to fall into the road between the two machines, using whatever strength and resourcefulness you may possess to keep out from under the rear wheels of either car. Then, to make things better still, along comes the camera car immediately behind, so that you have to roll out of the way to avoid being run over by that.

If the whole action were taken at the speed supposed in the story, with both machines traveling at twenty or thirty miles an hour, it would be too dangerous. Couldn't be done, without the risk of death. But by slowing the cars down, and having all the actors make

every movement as slowly as possible, and slow-cranking the camera, the incident can be pictured with little danger of more than a scratched face or wrenched shoulder, and will provide a great thrill for audiences who see it on the screen.

Another bit of action in the same story, where a man who has stolen an automobile is racing to escape his pursuers, and drives by accident over the edge of a cliff, to die beneath the wreckage of the stolen car:

On turns, along the dangerous road, the stolen car is "shot" from behind, as described above. These scenes are varied with "long shots," taken from the distance, that show the road along the precipice, with both pursued and pursuers racing along. Then we have a fairly close "shot" of the wheels of the stolen car, as they come close enough to the edge of the cliff to make you shudder; this "close-up" is taken from behind, with slow cranking. Then, perhaps, we have a view of the road ahead, the camera being placed (supposedly) on the stolen car. We see the road apparently

running towards us, the edge of the cliff at one side so close that it seems as though we'd surely go over.

Next, say, a close-up of the thief, showing his expression of terror as he loses control of the car and realizes that it is about to plunge over the cliff into space.

Then, the real "trick action" of the incident.

The car is rolled by hand to the very edge of the precipice, and blocked there with little stones that do not show—the tires of the front wheels actually projecting over the cliff. The actor taking the part of the thief holds his hands above his head, looking as terrified as he can, and brings them very slowly down in front of him, at the same time releasing the clutch of the car, with the gears in reverse and the motor running. The camera, placed quite close at one side, is slow-cranked backward. So that when the print from the film is projected at normal speed, we see the car dash to the very edge of the cliff, while the thief lets go of the wheel and throws his hands above his head just as the machine makes the plunge.

For the next shot, of course, we have a dis-

tant view of the scene, a "long shot," showing the car plunging down to destruction, with the thief still behind the wheel. This is done with a dummy figure. But on the screen, when the picture is completed, we jump from the close scene of the thief throwing up his hands as the car reaches the edge of the cliff to the long shot of the car falling with the dummy, and the illusion is perfect.

Before the car is pushed over the edge for the real fall, the engine is taken out, and everything else of value that can be salvaged is detached. In the final scene of this tragic death these accessories may be scattered around the wreck of the car, adding to the total effect of utter destruction. The body of the thief, half covered by one of the crumpled fenders—the real actor, of course, this time, shamming unconsciousness or death, properly smeared with tomato-catsup-and-glycerine blood, adds the finishing ghastly touch.

Do you believe that any one could see that picture,—well done, the chase along the mountainside, the rush to the edge of the cliff, the drop through space, and the wrecked car on the

ground—without a thrill? It would be quite convincing, and few indeed could tell which scenes were actual "straight" photographs and which were "tricked."

In fact, it is really that classification that makes the difference: How well is the thing done? Does it give an impression that is true to life? The fact that a trick is used is nothing against the film; indeed, it may be decidedly in favor of it, providing a novel and realistic effect is secured.

For example, when the scenes described above were first assembled in the finished film, the effect was not as good as had been anticipated. The camera man had not cranked quite slowly enough. Consequently, in some of the scenes the automobiles did not move fast enough on the screen; they rounded dangerous curves with such caution that when one car finally went over the cliff, it looked like a fake. The illusion of the story, that made it true to life, was destroyed, because of giving first an impression of cautious driving, and then of an accident that would only have occurred as a result of terror or recklessness.

So still another trick was resorted to: a purely mechanical one. Every other "frame" or individual exposure in the slow scenes was cut out, and the remaining frames of the film patched together again. Action that had been filmed in one second, with sixteen exposures, was reduced to eight frames, or half a second. It was a careful cutting and "patching" as the re-cementing of the film is called—but the second trick remedied the defects of the first.

By adding an additional "fake" to the first, the picture was made more nearly true to life!

Then a final touch was added to the whole business.

Immediately after the car plunged over the cliff, in the finished film, there comes a scene of the ground, far below, flying up at you. It is as though you were sitting in the car with the doomed thief, and get the effect of falling with him through the air.

To get the shot, it had been planned to lower a camera man over the precipice with ropes, allowing him to crank very slowly as he was lowered. But the natural difficulties were too great. The distance that the camera man

would have to be lowered, to secure the necessary effect, proved to be enormous. There was too much danger. The director was willing to go ahead, but the camera man balked. He said the director could go over the cliff and crank the camera himself if he wanted to—he'd be willing to risk his camera. But the director didn't want to. All he was willing to risk was his camera man.

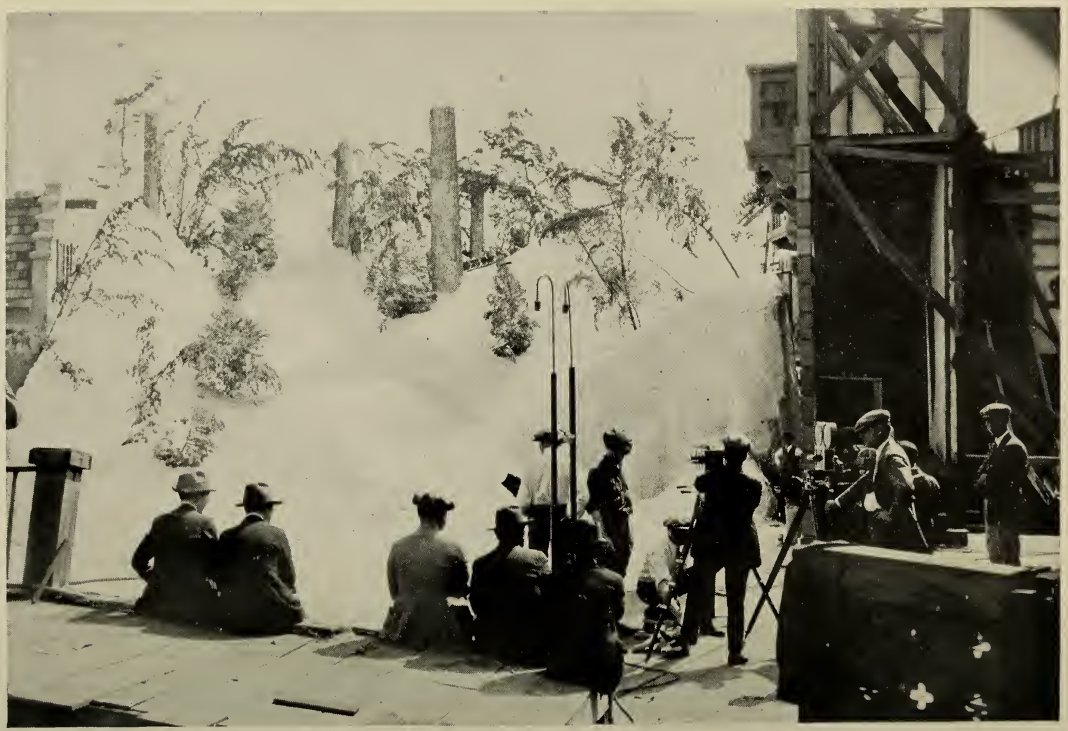
Looking at the picture after it was nearly ready for release, the producers decided that the thrill of the accident would be much greater with that ground-jumping-up-at-you shot, that everybody had been afraid to make, included. And the art director came to their assistance. He said he'd make the scene for them in the studio without danger, for fifteen dollars. They opened their mouths, in astonishment, and when they could get their breath, told him to go ahead.

He took a piece of bristol-board and in a few minutes sketched on it a rough, blurred view of open country, such as you might imagine you'd see looking down from a high cliff. Then he photographed it at normal speed, moving it

Courtesy Goldwyn Pictures Corporation.

A Movie "Miniature."

Representing Alaska in Southern California, for the Rex Beach picture "The Silver Horde." A supposed "long shot" or distant view of such a set as this appears full size upon the screen. In reality, the camera is only a few feet away when the picture is taken.



Courtesy Goldwyn Pictures Corporation.

A Snow Scene Made of Salt.

In order to secure "close-ups" that fit in with the realistic miniature snow scenes of the preceding illustration, real actors are photographed in such scenes as this. Tons of salt were used to make a few square rods of Alaska.

rapidly toward the lens and turning it a little as the camera was cranked. Result, secured in connection with the other scenes already made: the thrill of falling in an automobile through the air, and seeing the ground fly up at you.

In one of D. W. Griffith's shorter photoplays a number of girls leave a party with a fellow in a Ford; a storm is coming up. We see the car leaving the lighted house and starting down the dark street, we see the gathering storm, see the car jouncing along in the blinding rain as the storm breaks, see it cross a little bridge, with lightning flashes illuminating the scene, and finally we see it arrive safely at the home of the heroine, who gets out and runs to the back door in the dark like a half-drowned kitten.

The street scene was taken with lights illuminating the house windows, and enough of the street to show dimly the outlines of trees and so on in the supposed night. The short scene of the gathering storm (merely a picture of masses of moving clouds, taken of course some bright day when there happened to be a good cloud-effect) gives us the impression of

an impending deluge. The scene of the car in the driving rain was taken in the studio, with a black curtain hung behind the car, a man lying concealed on the farther running board jouncing up and down to give the impression that the machine was bumping rapidly along over a rough road, and a hose squirting rain upon the scene in front of the car, being driven upon it and past it by the blast of air from a huge aeroplane propeller whirling just out of the camera's sight. The scene of the auto crossing the little bridge was done in miniature; that is, a toy auto, mechanically propelled, equipped with tiny electric searchlights, was wound up and sent across a little eight-inch bridge, over a road that wound between trees made of twigs ten or twelve inches high, stuck in damp sand —with little fences, houses, everything, perfect—and the lightning made by switching a big sputtering arc-light behind the camera on and off. Then, the final scene, of the girl leaving the auto, was taken in fading daylight, with a hose again supplying the drenching "rain," and the print tinted dark blue to indicate night.

On the screen, the illusion of the whole was perfect. As I said, it is not whether or not a trick is used that counts—but how perfectly the thing is done, how complete the illusion that is carried, and how faithfully and sincerely that illusion or impressions conveys a really worth-while idea, or a story that is convincingly true to life.

You mustn't think, though, that all the big effects on the screen are secured by tricks. For indeed they are not. Sets are constructed that cost thousands and thousands of dollars, locomotives are run head on into each other, whole companies travel into out-of-the-way and dangerous places to film unusual scenes,—shipwreck, tropical adventures, Arctic rescues. A camera man told me of how, in a shelter on top of a rock above a water-hole in Central Africa, he watched for days to photograph wild elephants, and saw a fight between an elephant and a big bull rhinoceros, and in the end almost lost his life.

All over the world the moving-picture camera is now finding its way, blazing new trails, bringing back information of how this gold

field really looks, or how in the next range logging is carried on at ten thousand feet. Sooner or later you and I will see it on the screen, and it is for us to know something about the business—for the film is taking the place of many and many a printed page, and the picture, in part at least, is the speech of to-morrow.

Courtesy Goldwyn Pictures Corporation.

"Shooting" a Tramp on a Moving Train.

Imagine you are looking down at the tramp's head from the point where the camera is, with the train moving rapidly, and you can get an idea of what is shown on the screen.

Courtesy Goldwyn Pictures Corporation.

A Closer View of the Preceding "Take."

Note the number board leaning against the leg of the camera tripod. Before each scene is taken, this board is exposed in front of the camera with the scenario-number of the scene on it for identification.

CHAPTER III

THE WORLD THROUGH A CAMERA

THERE are two kinds of motion pictures.

One sort is the regular "feature,"—usually a six or seven reel photoplay, the bulk of the evening's entertainment—and the other kind is illustrated by the "news reels."

One kind tells stories. The other shows facts. "Robin Hood," for instance, tells a story. But the wonderful picture that showed the great horse-race between Man-o'-War and Sir Barton was merely a series of remarkable photographs of what actually happened.

There are of course many intermediate pictures and combinations, part way between the two, as we shall see; but when you stop to think of it all pictures fall under one or another of the two main classifications. Either they are entertainment pure and simple, possibly with a background of truth or philosophy

or fact, or else they are reality, presented as entertainment.

And here is an interesting thing: while the story side of motion-picture making, that has developed to a great extent from stage drama, has already reached very great heights, the other side of picture-making, that we see illustrated in the news reels, is still relatively in its babyhood. Scenics and news reels and an occasional so-called "scientific" or instructive reel are about all we have so far on this side of picture making, that will probably within our own lifetime come to be far greater than the other.

The "reality" films have developed from straight photography. They take the place of kodak snapshots, and stereopticon slides, and illustrations in magazines, newspapers, and books.

Between the two, cameras have come already to circle the whole world.

Not long ago in a New York skyscraper given over mostly to motion-picture offices and enterprises, three camera men met.

"Say, I'm glad to be back!" exclaimed one;

"I've been down in the Solomons for nearly a year. Australia before that, and all through the South Seas. Got some wonderful pictures of head-hunters. They nearly got *me,* once, when I struck an island where they were all stirred up because some white man had killed a couple of them."

"I'm just back from India, myself," remarked the second, "Upper Ganges, and all through there. Got a lot of great religious stuff."

"You fellows have been seeing a lot of the world," sighed the third, "while I've been stuck right here solid for the last eighteen months. Last eight months on a big French Revolution picture."

Two of the men were globe-trotting "travelogue" photographers; the third was a regular "studio" camera man; while the two had been searching the world, to secure motion pictures of actual scenes, the third had been taking pictures of carefully prepared "sets" that faithfully reproduced—just outside New York City—streets and houses of Paris as they were in the year 1794.

Let us take up first the kind of movies that we usually see to-day—the photoplays made in Hollywood or New York or Paris or wherever the studio may happen to be, that tell a story or show a dramatic representation of life somewhere else.

Suppose a story of the Sahara Desert is to be filmed at Culver City, California, where several different big studios are located.

Costumes are designed or hired, and actors and actresses are made up and togged out to represent desert chieftains and wild desert beauties and languid harem maidens and uncouth tribesmen. Horses are fitted out with all the trappings of Arab steeds. Half a dozen rebellious camels are hired from one of the big menageries that makes a specialty of renting wild animals to film companies.

Then, sets are constructed to represent the interiors of buildings in Tunis or Algiers, or some of the little cities of the desert. Possibly a whole street is constructed—and it is only necessary to build the fronts of the houses, of course, propped up from behind by braces and scaffolding that do not show in

the picture—to reproduce an alley of some town near the North African Coast.

Finally, as the scenes of the story or "continuity" are filmed, one after another, the company goes out "on location" to get the balance of the exterior scenes. Perhaps the sand dunes of Manhattan Beach, one of the small resorts near Los Angeles, not far from Culver City, are used to represent the hummocks of the Sahara Desert. Perhaps a part of the desolate bed of the San Gabriel River, where it leaves the mountains twenty miles east of Los Angeles, is used to show supposed Sahara gulley. Or the company may travel to the Mohave Desert, or all the way into Arizona, or some desolate portion of Old Mexico near the border town of Tia Juana below San Diego, to get just a bit of the real "Sahara" that they want. Maybe a desert tent is set up beneath the palm-trees of a supposed oasis, that, by careful photographing, looks like the real thing and gives no hint of the Los Angeles suburban traffic officer at a busy crossing less than fifty yards away.

The result? Possibly a very good picture of

the Sahara Desert, with Americans playing the parts of Mohammedan tribesmen and pieces of America representing Africa. But naturally there are many chances for mistakes. The costumes may be wrong. The actors may not look the parts, or act as the types they are supposed to represent really do. The dunes behind Manhattan Beach, or the "Wash," of the San Gabriel, may not really look like the Sahara at all.

Recently a widely traveled oil man was telling me of an afternoon he spent at a trading town on the East African coast, a thousand miles or so north of the Cape.

"I was killing the day with an old trader," he said. "We were to set out into the interior the next morning, and had nothing to do but amuse ourselves until we were ready to start. We saw the posters of a movie that was being shown, that told a story of the very town where we were. And say! When we went in, we certainly were amused, all right!

"It was an American film, made by one of the Hollywood companies. The heroine was washed ashore from the wreck, and regained consciousness just in time to see a tiger ready

to spring at her from under the palm-trees at the edge of the beach. But the hero was Johnny-on-the-spot. He was tiger-hunting himself, and dropped the beast with a single shot. He was wearing riding-breeches, and puttees, and a pith helmet,—sort of a cross between a motion-picture director and a polo player."

"What was the matter with it?" I asked, "Everything?"

"Pretty much. First place, the beach along those parts isn't anything like what was shown in the picture. There aren't any palm-trees within a thousand miles. Tigers don't grow in that part of the world, either. Lions, yes. But tigers, no. You have to go clear to India to get tigers.

"But that hero's outfit was the best. In the heat, there, he'd have died in six hours, in that outfit. My friend the old trader and I were wearing about all that anybody ever wears in those parts—ragged old shirts, and "shorts"—like running pants, or B. V. D.'s—and keeping out of the sun. If you do have to go around, in the heat of the day, the one important thing is

to wear some kind of a hat or cloth that protects the back of your neck and saves you from sunstroke. But the movie hero was sprinting around in the middle of the day with leather legs and a cartridge belt that would weigh at least ten pounds. Say, we had a great laugh!"

Not long ago I was asked to look at a film, made in Austria, that told a story of love and intrigue among the American millionaires. The hero's father was supposed to be a railroad king who lived in New York City, and the girl's mother, who also lived in New York, was a "railroad queen" at the head of a rival organization. Each morning the lovers, the hero and the heroine, slipped away from their homes—that looked more like the New York Public Library or the Pennsylvania Station than anything else except an Austrian palace—and ran down to the railroad yards. The boy stole a regular German engine from his father's round-house, and the girl got its twin sister from her mother's shop on the other side of the city, and they each climbed aboard and ran them outside the city until they met, on the same track, head on. Then the lovers got down

Courtesy Universal Pictures Corporation.

GETTING THRILLS WITH A BALLOON.

Motion-picture camera men circle the globe, and companies go almost any distance for a novel location or sensation. Note the carefully assembled "properties" apparently carelessly strewn on the ground beside the basket.

Courtesy W. W. Hodkinson Corporation.

AN OLD WHALING SHIP REFITTED TO MAKE A NEW MOVIE.

The *George W. Morgan*, nearly 100 years old, refitted and sent to sea to make a whaling story called "Down to the Sea in Ships."

and kissed each other on both cheeks in true American fashion (Austrian interpretation) somewhere near Hoboken, I suppose.

On the other hand, in contrast to these hurriedly made, inaccurate pictures, made to make money for ignorant people by entertaining still more ignorant people, are the really worth while historical films and others made with painstaking care. Some of the great American directors maintain entire departments for research work, that check up on the accuracy of each detail before it goes into production. costumes are verified, past or present, details of architecture are reproduced from actual photographs, and even incidents of history and the appearance of historic individuals are treated with scrupulous accuracy.

Valuable impressions of life in ancient Babylon could be gathered from Griffith's great picture "Intolerance." While not necessarily accurate in every detail, the wonderful Douglas Fairbanks films "Robin Hood" and "The Three Musketeers" instruct as well as entertain. In a magnificent series of historic spectacle films such as "Peter The Great,"

"Passion," and "Deception," the Germans have set a high-water mark of film production that combines dramatic entertainment with semi-historical setting.

It seems a pity after watching one of the really well-made historical photoplays, to have to see a picture of the American Revolution so carelessly made, in spite of its cost of nearly $200,000, that you feel sorry for the poor British redcoats at the battle of Concord, when the American minute men, outnumbering them about ten to one, fire on them at close range from behind every stone wall and tree or hummock big enough to conceal a rabbit. Why, according to that particular director's conception of the British retreat from Lexington, the patriots might just as well have stepped out from behind their protecting tree-trunks and put the entire English army out of its misery by clubbing it to death in three minutes.

Leaving dramatic photoplays, then, let us turn to the other kind of movie that shows what actually happens.

The news reels are the simplest form of this kind of movie. They correspond to the head-

lines in the daily newspapers, or newspaper illustrations. Indeed, a good many newspaper illustrations, nowadays, are merely enlargements made from single exposures, or "clippings," from the news reels. You may yourself have noticed pictures in the rotogravure sections of Sunday newspapers that show the same scenes you have already seen in motion in the news reels during the week.

To get the news reel material camera men are stationed, like newspaper correspondents, at various places all over the globe. Or, when some important event is to occur at some far-away place, they are sent out from the headquarters of the company, just as special correspondent or reporters would be sent out by a big city newspaper, or newspaper syndicate. Sometimes a camera man and reporter work together; usually, however, each works separately, for newspapers and movies are still a long way apart. If a new president is elected in China, a news-reel camera man—Fox, or Pathe, or International, or some other, or maybe a whole group of them—will be on hand to photograph the ceremonies. If a new eruption

is reported at Mount Etna, some donkey is liable to get sore feet packing a heavy motion-picture camera and tripod up the mountain while the ground is still hot, so that a news-reel camera man—possibly risking his life to do it—may get views of the crater, still belching fire and smoke and hot ashes and lava, for you to see on the screen.

The news camera men, like city news reporters, have to work pretty hard, not infrequently face many dangers, and get no very great pay. The tremendous salaries and movie profits that you sometimes hear about usually go to the studio companies, and not to these traveling employees.

Recently I talked with a "free lance" camera man, who had just completed a full circuit of the earth—England, Continental Europe, Turkey, and Asia Minor, through the Suez Canal and down into India, then Australia, New Zealand, Samoan Islands, and back to New York by way of San Francisco. He had paid his way largely with contributions to news reels, sold at a dollar or a dollar and a

half a foot. The last part of the way home he had worked his passage on a steamer. He had borrowed enough money from a friend in San Francisco to get him back to New York. He had about ten thousand feet—ten reels—of "travel" pictures, for which he hoped to find a purchaser and make his fortune. But he owed the laboratory that had developed his film for him a bill of some three hundred dollars that he couldn't pay, and was offering to sell the results of his whole year's work for fifteen hundred dollars. And at that he couldn't find a purchaser.

News reels and travel pictures, and beautiful "scenics" too, are only the forerunners of much more ambitious efforts to come, that before many more years have passed will be bringing the whole world before us through the camera's eye. Did you happen to see the marvelous record of sinking ships made by a German camera man on one of the U-boats during the ruthless submarine campaign of the Great War? Or the equally remarkable series taken of the marine victims of the German

cruiser *Emden?* They show what the camera can do, when the movie subject is a sufficiently striking one.

More than two years ago a camera man named Flaherty secured the backing of a fur-exporting firm to make a trip with his camera to the Far North. After laborious months of Arctic travel he returned to the Canadian city whence he had started with some thousands of feet of splendid negative. While it was being examined—so the story goes—a dropped cigarette ash set it on fire. Celluoid burns almost like gunpowder. The entire negative was destroyed in a few moments.

But Flaherty started out again, and returned once more with thousands of feet of film depicting the Eskimos' struggle for life against the mighty forces of Nature in the frozen North. From this negative a "Feature Film" was edited, called "Nanook of the North." It showed how the Eskimos build their snow huts or igloos, how an Eskimo waits to spear a seal, and how he has to fight to get him even after the successful thrust.

At first the big distributing companies that

handle most of the films that are rented by theater owners in this country didn't want to handle the picture because it was so different from the ordinary movie that they didn't think audiences would like it. But finally, after it had been "tried out" successfully at one or two suburban theaters, the Pathe Company decided to release it. Likely you've heard of it. It has been a big success. It is now being shown all over the world. It will probably bring in more than $300,000. Flaherty, as camera man, director, and story-teller rolled into one, has been engaged by one of the big photoplay producing companies at a princely salary to "do it again." This time, he has gone down into the South Seas, to bring back a story of real life among the South Sea Islanders.

Quite a number of years back a man named Martin Johnson went across Africa and secured some very remarkable pictures of wild animals. These jungle reels were released by Universal, and proved such capital entertainment that they brought in a fortune. Others followed Johnson's example, but for years no

one was able to equal his success. As Flaherty has done more recently, Johnson next went to the South Seas and made another "Feature Film" of life upon the myriad islands that dot the Southern Pacific Ocean. The film was fairly successful, but did not begin to make the hit that had been scored by the animal reels.

"Hunting Big Game in Africa," the next big "reality" film to make a hit with American audiences—aside from short reel pictures and an occasional story-scenic—"broke" on the New York market in 1923. It was made by an expedition under H. A. Snow, from Oakland, California, and represented some two years of work and travel, with a big expenditure of money.

Snow's experience in getting his picture before the public was not unlike that of Flaherty. The motion-picture distributors and exhibitors were so used to thinking in terms of the other kind of pictures, the regular movies or photoplays that you can see nearly every night in the week, that they were afraid people wouldn't be interested in "just animal stuff." In spite of the success made by "Nanook of the North,"

and the Martin Johnson pictures before that, they were afraid to try out pictures that were different from the usual run.

"Hunting Big Game in Africa" was more than ten reels long—two hours of solid "animal stuff." The Snow company finally decided to hire a theater themselves and see what would happen when the picture was presented to a New York audience.

You can imagine what the audience did. They "ate it up." The picture started off with views of the ship that was carrying the expedition to South Africa. Then there were shots of porpoises and whales. And thousands and thousands and thousands—they seemed like millions—of "jackass penquins" on desolate islands near the South African coast. Funny, stuffy little birds with black wings and white waistcoats, that sat straight up on end like dumb-bells in dinner jackets—armies and armies of them, a thousand times more interesting (for a change at least) than seeing the lovely heroine rescued from the villain in the nick of time, in the same old way that she was rescued last week and the week before. And

for that matter, two or ten years ago—or ever since movie heroes were invented to rescue movie heroines from movie villains when the movies first began.

From the penguins on, "Hunting Big Game in Africa" was certainly "sold" to each audience that saw it. There were scenes that showed a Ford car on the African desert, chasing real honest-to-goodness wild giraffes, and knocking down a tired wart hog after he had been run ragged. Only at the very end of the picture was there any particularly false note, when a small herd of wild elephants, that appeared very obviously to be running away from the camera, were labeled "charging" and "dangerous." Possibly they really were dangerous, but the effort to make them seem still more terrible than they actually were fell flat. When you're telling the truth with the camera, you have to be mighty careful how you slip in lies, or call out, "Let's pretend!"

Then there came another Martin Johnson picture of animals in Africa, possibly even better than the Snow film, and quite as successful. As usual, Martin Johnson took his wife

along, and the spectacle of seeing a young woman calmly grinding away with the camera, or holding her own with a rifle only a few yards away from charging elephants or rhinoceri was thrill enough for any picture. At many of the scenes audiences applauded enthusiastically—a sure sign of unqualified approval.

An interesting discovery that has come with the success of these "photographic" pictures, that show what actually happens as pure entertainment, so interesting that you don't think of its being instructive, is that ordinary dramatic movies can be made vastly more interesting and worth while if a good "reality" element is introduced.

The Germans were on the trail of this when they had wit enough to plan their historical pictures based on fact and actual historical personages, that would appeal to people of almost any civilized nation on the globe. So good was their example, that we have followed suit, here in America, with "Orphans of the Storm," and the big Douglas Fairbanks pictures, and a whole lot more.

But now, we have gone a step farther, a step

that adds to the danger and difficulty in picture making, but that shows more and more the wonderful possibilities of the screen.

Take "Down to the Sea in Ships."

A writer named Pell who lived up near New Bedford, Massachusetts, where the old whaling industry used to center, in the days before steam whalers carried the business—or what there is left of it—to the Pacific coast—had an idea. He wrote a story about a hero who turned sailor-man and went to sea on a whaler, and harpooned a real whale.

They make some wonderful motion pictures in Hollywood, but they don't harpoon many whales there. When you're a motion-picture actor, harpooning a real whale is a good trick—if you can do it.

Pell took his story to Mr. D. W. Griffith, famous ever since "The Birth of a Nation." But Mr. Griffith didn't have time to play with it, so he turned it over to a director named Elmer Clifton, who decided that a picture of a real whale would make a "real whale" of a picture. He got a company together and went to work.

Courtesy W. W. Hodkinson Corporation.

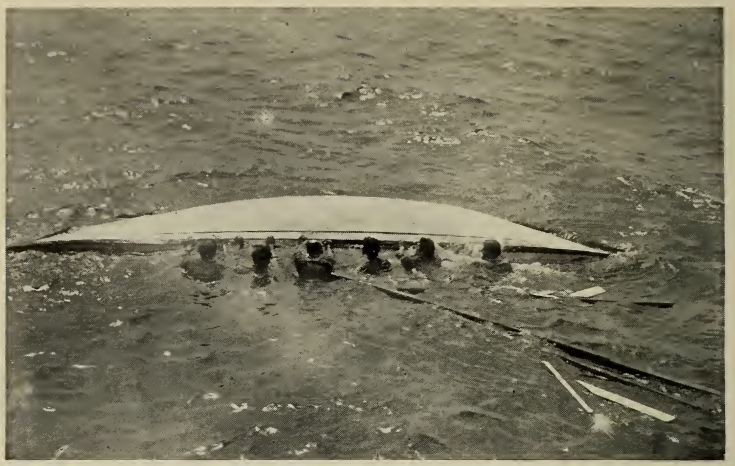
CAPSIZED BY A REAL WHALE.

Remarkable picture, taken during the cruise of the *George W. Morgan*, of a whaling-boat attacked by a wounded whale. (See page 62.)

Courtesy W. W. Hodkinson Corporation.

AIDING NATURE BY A SKILFUL FAKE.

In the original of this picture the boat appeared much as in the photograph above. Added dramatic value has been given by "retouching" or painting in the imaginary flukes of the whale, as he *might* have raised them if he had been more accommodating. (See page 62.)



Courtesy W. W. Hodkinson Corporation.

REAL DANGER ON THE HIGH SEAS.

Imagine working to right an overturned whale boat in shark-infested waters, with a dangerously wounded whale still cruising about in the vicinity, just for the sake of a motion picture! (See page 62.)

Courtesy W. W. Hodkinson Corporation.

THE SECOND STEP TO SAFETY.

The hero of the picture again sitting in the righted boat. A microscope will show the pains taken to secure realism in its film; the actor actually became a sailor for months, with hair grown in the fashion of sailing days. (See page 62.)

They decided the first thing to do would be to get the whale. If that part worked all right, they'd go ahead and make the rest of the picture, if it didn't—well, they could start over again and make some other picture, of a cat or a dog or a trick horse that wouldn't be so hard to play with.

They held a convention of old sea-captains, who decided that Sand Bay or some such place, in the West Indies, would be a likely spot for whales. They fitted up an old vessel, the last of the real old whalers, and sailed away.

Luck was with them. They struck a whole school of whales almost as soon as they had dropped anchor at the point that had been selected.

Green hands at whaling, they started off with every whale-boat they had, and cameras cranking. They tried to harpoon the first whale they came to, I'm told,—and missed it. But luck was with them again, decidedly. Missing the big whale, which happened to be a female, the harpoon passed on and struck a calf on the far side of her, that the amateur whalemen hadn't even seen.

Ordinarily, they say, a school of whales will "sound" or dive and scatter for themselves when one of their number is harpooned, but in this case it was a calf that was struck, and its mother stuck by it, and the rest of the school stuck by her, while the movie-whalers herded them about almost like cattle. They got some wonderful pictures.

Later, they captured a big bull whale, and had an exciting time of it. More pictures, and a smashed rowboat.

Then they returned to New Bedford and completed the photoplay.

As a "Feature Film" the final picture, "Down to the Sea in Ships" is nothing to boast about, *except* for the whales. Without the whaling incidents, it is a more or less ordinary melodrama, beautifully photographed, of the whaling days in old New Bedford. But the real whales make the picture worth going a long way to see.

A Scandinavian film, released in this country by the Fox organization under the name of "The Blizzard," does the same thing as "Down to the Sea in Ships." Only, it has a reel that

shows reindeer incidents, instead of whales. But it is just as remarkable. You see a whole gigantic herd of reindeer—hundreds and hundreds of them, the real thing—follow their leader across frozen hillsides and rivers and lakes, through sunshine and storm. Finally, in a blizzard, the men holding the leader that guides the herd get into trouble. One of them falls through the ice, while the other is dragged by the leader of the herd over hill and dale, snowbank and precipice until at last the rope breaks. The herd bolts and is lost.

It's a wonderful picture. Because of the reindeer incidents. But it couldn't have been made in Hollywood. It combines fiction with fascinating touches of actual fact.

About the time the reindeer picture was released in this country, a five-reel film that was made in Switzerland was shown at the big Capitol Theater in New York. It was made up of scenes of skiing, ski-jumps, and ski-races, in the Alps. Nothing else. But it furnished many thrills and real entertainment.

Here we come back again to the crux of the whole matter, *entertainment*. A picture has to

entertain us, whether we want to be instructed, or only amused. But between the two kinds of pictures that I have outlined in this chapter—the movies that merely tell a story and the pictures that show facts—there is this difference: Photoplays that are designed to be merely entertaining, to be good, have to *seem real.*

But photoplays that actually *are* real have to be genuinely *entertaining.*

Courtesy United Artists Corporation.

A Douglas Fairbanks "Set" Used in "The Three Musketeers."

Note the wheelbarrow, the peddler's box, and all the wealth of minute properties and detail necessary to properly costume and equip the actors and "dress" this elaborate set. (See next illustration).

Courtesy Goldwyn Pictures Corporation.

HOW A MOVIE "SET" IS MADE.

The scaffolding shows the flimsy construction of the movie buildings. Only the walls that will appear in the picture are constructed, propped up from behind by undressed scantlings. Note the reflectors set up to throw additional light on the scene that is being photographed.

CHAPTER IV

INSIDE THE STUDIOS

If you have never been inside a motion-picture studio, an interesting experience lies ahead of you. For what soon becomes an old story to any one working "on the lot," is fascinating enough to any one who sees it for the first time.

At Universal City, California, just across a range of hills outside Hollywood, lies a motion-picture plant that covers acres and acres. Administration and executive offices, big "light" and "daylight" stages, property rooms, costume department, garage, restaurant, power plant, carpenter shop, laboratory, great menagerie even, are all grouped along the base of rolling California hills that furnish countless easy "locations" for stories of the Kansas prairies or Western ranchos, or even the hills of old New England.

In the heart of New York City, close beside

the roaring trains of the Second Avenue "L" and within hooting distance of the tug-boats on the Harlem River, stands the old Harlem Casino—for years a well-known East-side dance-hall. In this building, now converted into a compact motion picture studio, the first big Cosmopolitan productions came into existance—"Humoresque," "The Inside of the Cup," and all the rest.

Both the great "lot" at Universal City, under the blazing California sun, and the old Harlem Casino, with dirty February snow piled outside under the tracks of the elevated,—each absolutely different from the other—are typical motion-picture studios.

In each you can find the same blazing white or greenish-blue lights, with their tangled cables like snakes underfoot, the same kind of complicated "sets" on various stages, the same nonchalant camera men chewing gum and cranking unconcernedly away while the director implores the leading lady with tears in his voice—and perhaps even a megaphone at his mouth—to: "Now see him! On the floor at your feet! Stare at him! Now down—kneel

down! Now touch him! Touch him again, as if you were afraid of him! Now quicker—feel of him! Feel of him! He's DEAD!"

Suppose we step inside the door of a typical motion-picture studio. We find ourselves in a little ante-room, separated by a railing from larger offices beyond. The place seems like a sort of cross between an employment office and the outer office of some big business enterprise. At one point there is a little barred cashier's window like that at a bank. There is usually an attendant at a desk or window marked "Information," with one or two office boys, like "bell-hops" in a hotel, to run errands.

Coming and going, or waiting on benches along the walls, are a varied assortment of people: a young woman with a good deal of rouge on her cheeks and a wonderful coiffure of blonde hair, an old man with a wrinkled face and long whiskers, a couple of energetic-looking young advertising men, and a chap with big hoot-owl spectacles and a flowing tie who wants to get a position as scenario writer. In the most comfortable chair a fat man, with eyeglasses astride a thick curved nose, is waiting

to see the general manager, and fretting at being detained so long.

A very pretty girl comes into the office with a big collie dog on a leash, as a motor purrs away from the door outside. One of the boys like bell-hops jumps to open the inner door for her, and she sails on through without even a glance around. She is one of the minor stars, with a salary of about six hundred dollars a week. The collie is an actor, too: he is on the pay-roll at $75 a week—and worth every dollar of it to the pictures.

At one side is the office of the "casting director," who passes on the various "types," hires the "extras," and decides whether or not this or that actor or actress is a real "trouper" who can fill the bill. Into this office the army of "extra people" who make a precarious living picking up a day's work here and there around the studios as "atmosphere" gradually find their way; here the innumerable applicants for screen honors come to be looked over, and given a try, or turned away with a shake of the head, and perhaps a single comment such as "eyes won't photograph well—

Courtesy Goldwyn Pictures Corporation.

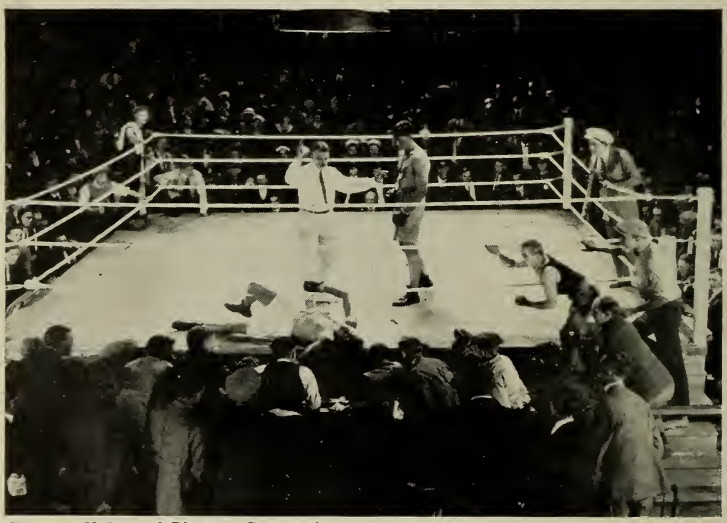
APPLYING THE MYSTERIES OF "MAKE-UP."

A veteran actor building a beard, bit by bit, with a surgeon's artery-holding apparatus, an orange-stick, spirit gum, wool-carder, and a fine comb.

Courtesy W. W. Hodkinson Corporation.

A Typical Movie "Interior."

Notice the carbon arc lights at sides of the picture, used to illumine the set. The glaring oblong faces of the lights can be noticed in the center lights on the right. From the glare of these lights actors often get an intensely painful affliction called "klieg-eyes."



Courtesy Universal Pictures Corporation.

Staging a Movie Prize-Fight.

Notice how each actor in the foreground has to play his part, no matter how unimportant. To make the scene realistic, each "extra" must appear as interested as any spectator at a real prize-fight.

too blue"; here the many experienced actors, temporarily out of work, come to be greeted by: "Hello, Harry! You're just the bird I wanted to see! Got a great little part for you in an English story; older brother—sort of half-heavy"; or: "Sorry, Mame—not a thing to-day. Try us next week. We'll probably begin casting for 'Wheels of Fate' about Friday."

But let us pass on beyond the outer offices, and see where the girl with the collie went.

Through a hallway we come suddenly into a vast, dark, cavernous interior, high and wide and shadowy. From somewhere off at our left comes a sound of hammering, where a new "set" is being erected. Off at the right is more hammering and pounding with the squeaking of nails being drawn as another set, in which the "shooting" has been finished, is being "struck," or taken down. From a far corner of the great cavern there is a radiance of bluish-green light, where one of the companies is "working."

Curiously enough, this huge dark place is called the "light" stage. It gets its name from

the fact that scenes can be photographed on it only with artificial light.

All about is a labyrinth of still standing sets —here a corner of a business office, and just beyond the interior of a drawing room in a rich home, with a beautiful curved stairway mounting ten feet or so into nothing at the right. Next comes the corner of a large restaurant. Under the guidance of an assistant director, in the glare of a single bluish-green Cooper-Hewitt "bank" turned on as a work light, property men are "dressing" it. They are putting yellow table-cloths on the tables (in the finished picture they will look white; in reality they are yellow instead of white in order not to be too glaring, before the picture can be exposed long enough to bring out the contours and details that are more important in the darker places); and hanging a row of horse-race pictures along the wall.

This is a big studio, supposed to be making a dozen or more pictures at once. We are surprised that on this whole great dark "light" stage only one company is working; we learn that two others are "shooting" elsewhere on

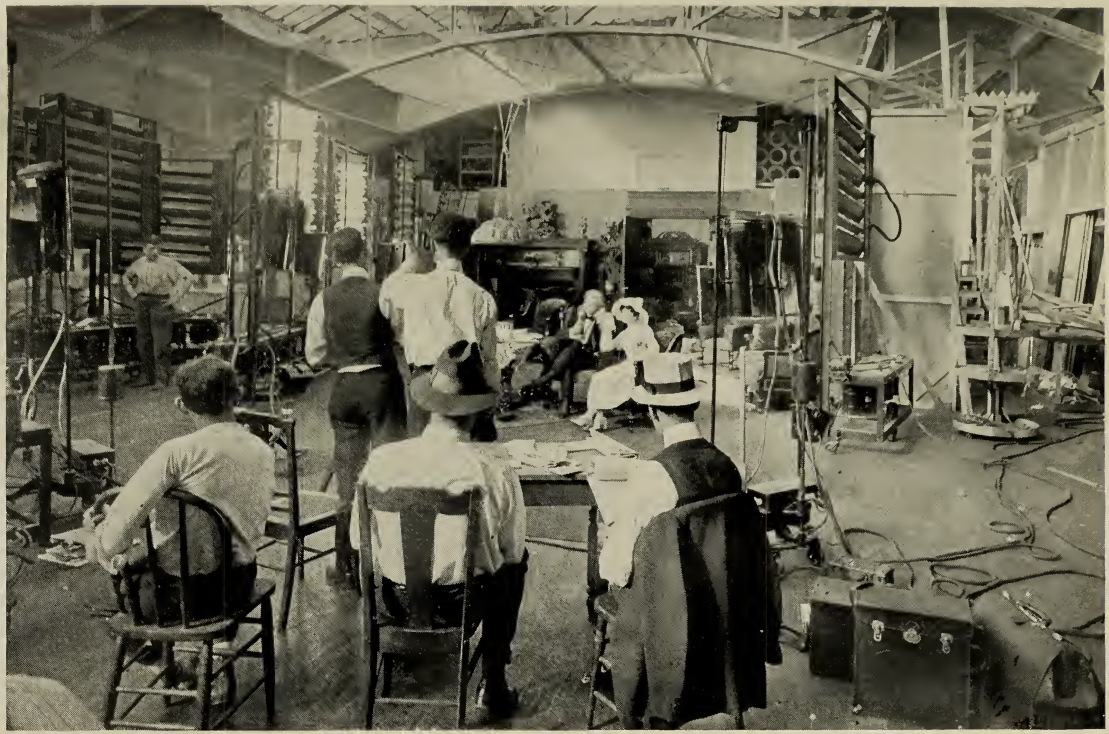
the lot; one in back of the carpenter shop, where a clever director has found an ideal "location" for his purpose right under his nose, and another on one of the big "daylight" stages that we shall see presently. Several other companies are out on location miles from the studio—one perhaps in another State on a trip that will last a couple of weeks. Still others are not at the "shooting" stage of their picture at all; one or two are still "casting," one that follows the methods used by Griffith is "in rehearsal," and still others are merely waiting while scenario writer and director work out the final details of the scenario or "continuity," or while the director "sits in" with the cutter or "screen editor" and title writer to put the finishing touches on the completed product.

We go over to the corner where the one company on the big stage is "shooting." A dozen people are sitting around on chairs or stools, just outside the lights. About in the middle of them, with a whole phalanx of lights at right and left, two cameras are set up. Beside them, in a comfortable folding camp-chair with a

back rest, sits the director. He is wearing what a humorous writer has called the "director's national costume" of soft shirt, knickerbockers, and puttees. On the floor beside his chair is a megaphone.

If you hold your hands together with the palms flat, making a narrow angle about a third of a right angle, you can get an idea of what a camera "sees." This angle is called the "camera angle." Only what happens within that narrow angle will be recorded on the film. Sometimes white chalk-lines are drawn on the floor to mark the camera angle; what is within the lines will be photographed, while what is outside will not show.

Along the sides of this open space that the camera will photograph are ranged the bright white carbon lights and the bluish-green vacuum lights that illumine the scene. Overhead, suspended by heavy chains from tracks that traverse the ceiling of the great stage, are more lights; white carbon "dome" lights, and additional bluish-green Cooper-Hewitt "overhead banks."



Courtesy Brown Bros.

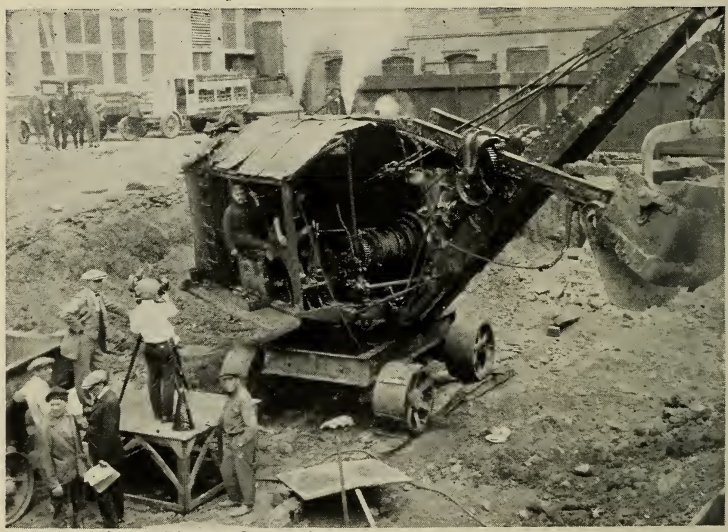
How a Motion Picture Interior is Made.

A mass of complicated paraphernalia is necessary to light and equip a motion-picture stage. The tall lights with the lines across them are the "Cooper-Hewitts," or vacuum lights, called "banks." The smaller square lights are the white arc-lights or "Kliegs." The snake-like cables on the floor carry the electricity.

Courtesy W. W. Hodkinson Corporation.

ENGINE TROUBLE ON A DAKOTA PRAIRIE.

To get the scenes shown in this story of a transcontinental tour the motion-picture company travelled almost across the continent.



Courtesy Goldwyn Pictures Corporation.

WHEN THE HERO IS THE CAPTAIN OF A STEAM SHOVEL.

Note how the reflectors, seen at the bottom of the picture, are tilted down to throw the light up into the face of the engineer, while the camera is raised to the right place on a platform.

Thin bluish smoke, like vapor, curls outward and upward from most of the white carbon lights. They give off a good deal of heat. A couple of spot-lights like those used in theaters are situated on scaffolding higher than a man's head, behind the cameras to left and to right, with an attendant in charge of each.

In the bright glare the faces of all who are not "made up" with grease paint and powder look greenish yellow. All color values are distorted. Tan-colored shoes look green.

A scene has just been taken. The assistant director turns to an electrician. "Kill 'em!" he says. The electrician goes to the different lights, pulling switches to "cut 'em off." In a moment only one of the bluish-green "double banks" is left to serve as a working light. This is to save electricity, of which the array of lights takes an enormous amount.

The scene that has been taken is, we will say, of an old-fashioned New England sitting room. In the center is a marble-topped table. In a far corner is a "what-not," with marble shelves. There is a bookcase against one of

the walls, and old prints and lithographs are hung here and there. In one place is a needlework "sampler," with a design and motto.

The director is talking with the two actresses who were in the scene. They are in costumes of the Civil War period, with flounces and hoopskirts. They are supposed to be sisters.

Suddenly the director decides to take the scene over again. He has thought of a bit of more effective action that will get the point he is trying to make in the story over more effectively. "We'll shoot it again," he says. "Let's run through it once more first."

The two actresses, already thoroughly familiar with the scene, rehearse it again, adding the new bit of detail as the director instructs them. He is not quite satisfied, and takes one of the parts himself, showing the actress how he wants her to put her hand up to her face. Finally she does it to suit him, and he is satisfied. "All right," he says, "we'll shoot it. —Lights!"

The lights are switched on once more, and in the bright, sputtering glare the sisters walk into the scene. Just before they cross the line

into the camera angle both camera men start grinding.

After about fifteen seconds of action the director nods, well pleased. "Cut!" he says shortly, and both camera men stop.

Half an hour's preparation and rehearsal for fifteen seconds of action!

Again the lights are switched off. The man in charge of the script, sitting on a stool with a sheet of paper snapped on a board on his lap, puts down the number of the scene and adds details of costume—what each sister is wearing, the flowers that one is carrying in her hand, and so on—to have a complete record in case of "retake," or other scenes that match with this before or after.

"Now we'll move up on 'em," says the director. The cameras are moved closer, and the action of the preceding scenes is repeated. This time the cameras are so close that the faces of the actresses will appear large on the screen, with every detail of expression showing. Before the close-ups are begun, the lights are moved up, too, and one of the spot lights switched around more to one side to give an

attractive "back lighting" effect on the hair of the sisters, that appears almost like a halo, later, when it is seen on the screen.

Before each scene is taken an assistant holds a slate with the director's name, the head camera man's name, and the number of the scene, written on it, in front of the cameras, and the camera men grind a few turns. In this way, the "take" is made.

When the different "takes" are finally matched together in the finished picture these numbers will be cut off, but they are necessary to facilitate the work of identifying the hundreds or even thousands of different shots of which the final picture is composed.

Leaving the great dark "light stage" we pass on into the lot beyond. In front of us is another great stage, but this time open to the sky. Instead of artificial lights, there are great white cloth "reflectors," to deflect the sunlight on to the scene and intensify the light where under the sun's direct rays alone there would be shadows.

Sets, actors, camera men and action are all as they were on the other stage, except that

instead of a profusion of sets we find here only one or two, as not nearly so many scenes are taken here as on the other stage.

Formerly nearly all scenes were taken in sunlight, and studios were built that had no provision for lighting except the sun. But while the film industry was still in its infancy the development of artificial lighting made possible results that could not be secured with sunlight alone, and since that time artificial lighting is used on most motion-picture scenes that represent "interiors."

About us on the "lot" are other stages, covered with glass, that lets in the sunlight but keeps out the rain, so that work may go on uninterruptedly. On most of these a combination of natural and artificial light is used—electric lights as in the "light stage," supplemented by daylight.

We pass on to the property houses—great buildings like warehouses ranged one behind the other. In one place we find a room where modeling is going on; skilled artists are making statues that will be used in a picture depicting the life of a sculptor. In another place

special furniture is being made. One great warehouse-like building is devoted to "flats" and "drops," of which the differing sets can in part, at least, be built. Then there are the costume rooms, and the "junk" rooms, with knick-knacks of all descriptions.

You'd be amazed to know how many properties are needed in the making of even the simplest motion pictures. Take, for instance, the set that we have already described—an old New England sitting-room. The furniture, the marble-topped table and the what-not with its marble shelves and the chairs and possibly a hair-cloth sofa, were of course obvious. The old prints and lithographs and even the sampler, hardly less so; but in addition to these, think of the ornaments that would have to appear on the what-not shelves and the kind of lamp that would be on the table and what books there would have to be in the bookcase. Without these details, the room would not look natural.

Take a look around the room where you are reading this page. Notice how many little things there are that you would never think of

Courtesy United Artists Corporation.

DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS AS 'D'ARTAGNAN IN "THE THREE MUSKETEERS."

Here are presented all three basic characteristics of a good story—fascinating characters engaged in stirring action, at an interesting time and place. Note the careful details of costuming, and decorations of the old furniture.

Courtesy United Artists Corporation.

ANOTHER SCENE FROM "THE THREE MUSKETEERS."

See how even the flagstones of this narrow alley of Old France have been reproduced with faithful care.

arranging, if you were to have carpenters and property men reconstruct it for you as a set for a picture. Newspapers—all the hundred and one little things, left here and there, that go to make a home what it is—even to the scratches on the walls, or the corner knocked off one arm of a chair.

The property man of a famous director once told me: "I've got the greatest collection of junk in the whole business. Just odds and ends. No one thing in the whole outfit worth anything in itself, but the King (he was referring to the director) would be crazy if he sold it for ten thousand dollars—yes, or twenty-five thousand, either. I tell you, sometimes junk is the most important thing in a picture."

After a set has been built, it is usually "dressed" by hiring first the furniture from one of the concerns that have grown up for just this purpose—renting furniture, old or new, to motion-picture companies that want to use it for a few weeks. If, in addition to what has been rented, the producing company is able to supply bits of "junk" from its own

property room and make the set look more natural, so much the better.

The story is told of one enterprising concern in Los Angeles that started in collecting beer-bottles just after prohibition went into effect. Since the bottles were no longer returnable, they were able to buy them here and there for almost nothing, until they had on hand a tremendous supply. The word went around that such and such a concern was in the market for bottles, and every boy in Los Angeles gathered up what he could find and took them around while the market was still good. People thought they were crazy, and had a good laugh at the movie industry that didn't know any more than to buy up hundreds and hundreds of old beer-bottles that nobody would ever be able to use again.

Then one of the producing companies wanted a batch of bottles for some bar-room scene and found that they didn't happen to have any on the lot. They went to the big property concern that they usually traded with, only to find that they, too, didn't happen to have any beer-bottles. So they went to the concern that

had been buying them all up at junk prices.

Certainly they could have some bottles—all they wanted! They would be thirty cents a week each, and a dollar apiece for any that were broken or not returned. Take it or leave it!

The corner on old beer-bottles had suddenly become profitable. The producing company tried to get bottles elsewhere and beat the monopoly—but time was pressing. When the overhead of a single company is running at hundreds of dollars a day, a property man will not be forgiven if he holds up the whole production while he scours the city to save money on beer-bottles. The price was paid.

But let us get on with our tour of the studio. We have not yet come to one of the most important places of all—the laboratory where the film is developed.

The laboratory work of many producing companies is not done on the lot at all, but is sent away to one of the big commercial laboratories that does work for many different companies. But several of the larger producers have their own laboratory plants.

In the laboratory we visit first the developing-room, feeling our way cautiously into the dark around many corners that cut off every possible ray of light from outside. Walking on wet slats we reach at last the chamber in the middle of what seems to be an almost impenetrable labyrinth, and in the dim red light can barely make out the vats where the strips of celluloid, wound back and forth on wooden hand-racks, are being dipped into the developer.

Nowadays many of the laboratories are equipped with complicated developing machines, that combine all the processes of developing, washing, "fixing," and drying in one. Where prints, made from the original negative, are being developed, tinting is added. The undeveloped film, tightly wound in small rolls, is threaded through one end of the developing machine in the dark-room; it travels over little cog-wheels that mesh into the holes at the edges of the film, and goes down into a long upright tube filled with developer. Coming back out of this, still on the cogs, it travels next down into a tube of clear water

for washing. Then down into another tube containing "hypo," and up again for another tube and second washing. Then, still winding along on the little cogs it travels through a partition and out into a light room, where it passes through an airshaft for drying, across an open space for inspection, and is finally wound into as tight a roll as it started from in its undeveloped state.

In the printing-room, still in the dim red light, we see half a dozen printing-machines at work, with raw film and negative feeding together past the aperture where the single flash of white light makes the exposure that leaves the negative image upon the print.

Next, in daylight once more, we see the great revolving racks of the drying-room used for film developed by the hand process—with hundreds of feet of the celluloid ribbon wrapped around and around great wooden drums.

In the assembling-room we find girls at work winding up strips of film and cementing or patching the ends of the film together to make a continuous reel.

Another room is more interesting still. This

room is dark once more, with a row of high-speed projection machines along one side and a blank wall on the other. Here the finished film, colored and patched, receives its final inspection. Against the white wall four or five pictures are flickering simultaneously. Since the projection machines are only a few feet away from the white surface that acts as a screen, each picture measures only two or three feet long and two-thirds as much in height. In one picture we may see a jungle scene; alongside it a reel of titles is being flashed through, one after another; next to this again is the "rush stuff" for a news reel with the president shaking hands so fast it looks as if he had St. Vitus dance; next comes a beautifully colored scenic, and at the end of the row the dramatic climax of a "society film," rushing along at nearly double its normal theater speed.

Leaving the laboratory, we pass down a street, bordered on one side by a row of little box-like offices that are used by the directors of the different companies; opposite, in a similar row of offices, the scenario writers are housed.

The end of the street brings us back once more to the building that houses the administrative offices through which we came when we entered.

If we had time we could visit the menagerie that lies at the rear of the studio proper, and that makes even the line-up of a circus tent look tame. Or, we could spend a day watching the company shooting the storm scene at the back edge of the lot, where the customary old airplane propeller has been mounted on a solid block with a motor attached and backed up alongside the scenes to furnish a gale of wind.

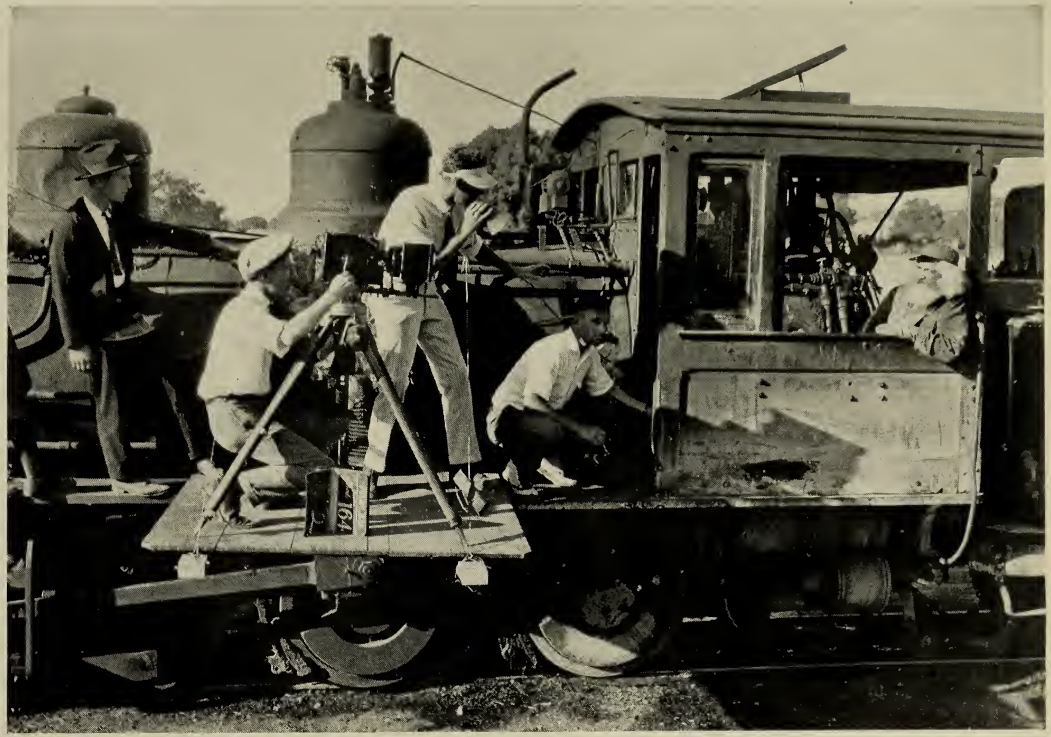
But we have already seen enough for an introduction.

To make a six-reel picture takes from three or four weeks to twice as many months and costs all the way from ten or fifteen thousand dollars to half a million, and sometimes even a million. You can imagine the investment required where a producing organization is running ten or a dozen companies at once, each turning out pictures at top speed.

Only the other day one of the Hollywood

studios changed hands at the sale price of three-quarters of a million dollars. Some are worth twice that amount.

But it is not the size of the investment that counts. It is the quality of the finished product. That is the thing we want to look farther into.



Courtesy Goldwyn Pictures Corporation.

FILMING AN OLD ENGINEER ON A FAST-MOVING LOCOMOTIVE.

Notice how close director and assistant director are to the line of the "camera angle." The director using a small megaphone to overcome the noise of the train and the rushing air.

Courtesy Goldwyn Pictures Corporation.

ANOTHER RAILROAD SCENE.

The umbrella put up to shade the company gives an idea of the length of time often necessary to take even the simplest scenes. Hours, possibly, were spent at this one spot.

CHAPTER V

MAKING A MOTION PICTURE

Once I was turned loose in New York City with thirty-odd thousand dollars and a novel by a popular author, and told to make a movie out of them.

Suppose that should happen to you. How would you begin?

Of course you would want to make a better picture than so many of these other fellows seem able to turn out. But how would you start? Just by hiring some actors and a camera man and telling them to get busy?

It is not so easy as that.

The first thing for me, to be sure, was getting together the men who would help make the photoplay. Re-writing the story into a scene-by-scene continuity, hiring a studio and attending to all the business details, selecting a cast, picking out the "locations" for scenes, de-

signing the "sets" and supervising the construction of them, and "directing" the scenes, is more than any one person can do. The Swiss Family Robinson itself couldn't do it alone.

So I selected and hired a director, and a camera man, and a continuity writer, and an art director to design the sets. That took quite a while.

Then the trouble began.

The director decided he wanted an assistant director; the camera man decided he wanted an assistant camera man; the art director decided that I didn't know what I was doing, and the "owners" decided that everything done so far was all wrong.

That brought out two very interesting things about motion pictures that apply to lots of other businesses as well. And sports, too, if you like, and almost everything else.

The first is the matter of coöperation.

When the rowers in a boat pull only when they feel like it, the boat goes wabbling all over the place, instead of straight ahead, and everybody gets his knuckles barked. Every-

body has to pull together. Imagine a football team without any teamwork!

Movies are so complicated, in the making, that dozens of people, hundreds often, have to pull together when they are being made.

That very thing is one of the big reasons why moving pictures to-day aren't any better than they are. Mostly movie people haven't yet learned to pull well together, or how exceedingly important it is in the making of pictures.

If you can't work with other fellows without bucking and kicking,—don't ever try motion-picture work.

The other trouble was with the owners. There were too many bosses on the job, which always makes a mess.

That quaint, humorous philosopher, "Josh Billings," once said, "It ain't ignorance that makes so much trouble; it's so many people knowing too many things that ain't so."

With movies, that's an ever-present danger.

Mostly, we're all of us so sure of things, that we saw or heard or thought or remember, that we just know we're right, about this or

that, and can't be wrong. If we know a little bit about surveying, we feel we can tell surveyors how to survey, and so on. And the less we know about a thing (as long as we do know something about it) and the more indefinite that thing and the knowledge about it are, the more we think we know about it.

Take stories: when you read one, you know whether you like it or not; but could you tell how it would be apt to strike other people? It's easy to think you can do that—and most motion-picture producers and financiers are sure they can. But as a matter of fact, an editor, trained for years in the selection of stories, could probably do a lot better.

In motion pictures, the man who puts up the money for a production has to be pretty wise to realize how much less he probably knows about motion pictures than the men he hires to make the pictures for him.

As yet, few owners or producers of motion pictures know enough to keep their hands off all the things that they ought to leave to their employees.

Well, to get back to this particular movie.

We got another director, and then decided to give him an assistant after all. And we got another camera man—and then gave him an assistant. We got a cast, and started off to the city where most of the work was to be done.

I say "we." That is correct. The owners insisted on "sitting in" on everything, so that each decision was a compromise, instead of being the best judgment of the one they had hired to make that picture for them.

When we came to taking the first scenes we made a discovery.

Our hero was a sissy.

He looked like a regular fellow—we had every reason to suppose he was at least as much of a regular fellow as most actors can be. But he threw a baseball the way a girl does.

He couldn't even throw a custard pie. Luckily we didn't want him to. But we did want him to look and act like a man's man, and mostly it was mighty hard for him.

He had fifteen or twenty different suits, but no sign of a tennis-racket, or baseball glove, or golf-stick.

He couldn't drive an automobile. But he was supposed to be a wonderful actor—just the man to play a hero!

Then, along came the property man.

You will remember that a chain is no stronger than its weakest link. A motion picture, that is made by the combined efforts of a whole group of people, all pulling together, is much the same way. If any one of the group, on whom some particular duty depends, is ignorant, or inexperienced, or lazy, or pig-headed, the defects of his work will mar the finished film.

If the actors can't act well, the picture will be laughed at; if the camera man is poor, the photography will be poor, and so on.

The property man is the one who has to see that the details of a picture are correct; that if the hero has a handkerchief showing in his pocket when he walks out of one scene, he has it when he walks into the next, and so on.

When you realize that a picture is usually taken location by location and set by set, instead of in the natural order of the scenes, you

Courtesy W. W. Hodkinson Corporation.

GETTING A COMEDY CLOSE-UP FOR A LAUGH.

In this scene, where detail of expression is important, the big reflector is brought close to the subject and held in place by the property man, whose head is just outside the "camera angle."

Courtesy Goldwyn Pictures Corporation.

A "Location" Where Reflectors Are Essential.

Under the big trees of a forest there is never very much illumination for quick photography, and reflectors to throw additional light on the actors' faces are doubly important.

can realize how important it is to have some one check up on all the details.

The first interior scenes to be taken, we will say, are those in a drawing-room set, that the carpenters completed first. They are, perhaps, the scenes that in the script are numbered 22, 23, 49, 107, 108, 109, 191, 224, and 225. In Scene 22 the hero comes into the drawing-room and finds that his father has just had a severe paralytic stroke. In Scene 21, perhaps, he said good-by to a companion on the front steps and then entered the house. Scene 21 was taken "On location" three months before Scene 22 is to be taken in the studio. But in the finished picture, the hero will walk through the front door and immediately come into the drawing-room.

It is the duty of the property man to see that he isn't wearing a golf suit when he goes in the door on one side and riding-breeches when he comes out on the other side of the door.

Our property man was a friend of the owners, who had no previous experience to speak of. They wanted him to learn the business

(or art, if you prefer) and insisted on his appointment.

That is no unusual thing in picture-making; it would amaze people to know how far, in the case of the great majority of all pictures that are made, the owners influence things.

If you have a good director, and assistant director, and photographer, and actors, what difference does a property man make? It would seem, would it not, that the various assistants would look out for all the details necessary, dividing the work up among them?

But they can't. There was the cat, for instance.

We were taking some of the early scenes in a city of the Middle West (one of the great charms about movie-making is that you often travel to the places you want to photograph, instead of trying to "fake" them in the country around the studio) and the script called for a cat.

The hero, according to the story, would not desert his old cat when he left town, so he took her along in his automobile.

All correct as far as the written story was

concerned—but now to get the genuine purring and mewing or scratching cat. The assistant director couldn't do it, because he was busy sticking with the director and helping him in the scenes, keeping the numbers of the scenes, the "takes" (or different shots of the same scene) and so on. The assistant camera man also had to be on the set, holding the number-board, reloading cameras, and all the rest. The continuity writer was making some changes in the script. The owners were buying an automobile. The art director, and everybody else available except the property man, were out hunting for locations.

So the new property man must get the cat. And he had no experience.

He had plenty of time, to start with. But instead of securing a likely candidate and trying it out, he decided that the cat of a friend of his would do.

It wouldn't. Friend wouldn't let cat act. The property man only found that out the day we wanted to have the scenes taken. If he'd been experienced, he wouldn't have let an "unimportant" detail wait so long.

But there was a big grocery store near the hotel where we were staying, where they had a wonderful big tiger Tommy—tame as anything. Property man, in a hurry, decided he would do nicely.

But he didn't. Tommy was well-mannered enough, and friendly, in the store, among his friends and customers and customary surroundings; but after he had been shut up in a basket half the morning, and all jolted up in the automobile getting out to "location" besides, he was another Tom entirely.

He would push like an elephant to get his big striped head out of the basket, and once his head was out the rest of him would follow it; and once the whole of him was out he would scratch and claw until he got clear of all hands that tried to reason with him or delay him; and once he got clear he was on his way to somewhere else at about ninety miles an hour.

It would have taken a mighty fast shutter, with a telescope lens behind it, to have photographed Thomas that day. He wasn't sitting for his portrait.

So the property man, desperate now, because he was holding up the whole company, tried again. This time he drew a white angora lady cat, with a kitten five inches long to keep her from brooding on living in a basket. She was contentment itself, and because he couldn't waste another day we had to use her.

Result of two days' cat-hunting by a new property man: a garage-mechanic hero with a beautiful mother-cat shedding long Persian fur over him.

The cat always looked in one direction. People who watched the picture afterward wondered why. We knew. She was looking at the kitten. To make her shift her lovely eye we had to move the kitten.

The director wanted a metal aeroplane with a propeller that would whirl in the wind for the radiator cap of the hero's automobile. Before the property man found one he had to put two cities with a combined population of nearly half a million on their respective ears, and we nearly all of us had to turn in and help him do it. But in the end we got the little aeroplane, and the director was happy.

It is interesting work, this "shooting" picture out on "location." There were nearly twenty of us in the party—owners, cameramen, writers, and assistants, besides the actors. Only the actors taking the principal parts were along with us, on account of the expense. For "bits" or "extras"—characters that appeared only once or twice for a moment or so in the finished picture—we relied on finding people in the cities and towns we visited, ready and able to take the parts.

Indeed, it would surprise you—or maybe it wouldn't—to know how far the lure of picture-making has spread. Set up a camera almost anywhere in the country, and interested spectators will come out of the air from nowhere at all, as mosquitoes seem to come to a fisherman. And for the parts in your picture, if you want them, you can have almost any one, from the leader of the sewing circle to the village derelict.

More work for the property man!

Mostly, the boys that you find do the best work of all. A youngster of six or eight, if he once gets the spirit of the thing, falls into a

part wonderfully, and acts as naturally as a pup in a barnyard.

We would start out in the morning from the front of the hotel where we happened to be staying. Spectators, few or many, always gathered in a fringe as soon as they saw the cameras being carried out to the machines.

There were two machines that we needed to use in the picture—both roadsters. Then there was a big "work car," some old seven-passenger, to take the camera men and actors and as much of the duffle as could be crowded in. There was always a tremendous amount of stuff to be lugged—cameras, and film-boxes, and big mirrors and reflectors to use in getting additional light, and so on.

If we were to take any "inside shots" as well, there was also a truck to take along a load of lights—big metal standards with intricate carbon lights and their reflectors above —with transformers and yards and yards of cable to connect them up with, and mechanics and electricians to do the work. Or perhaps a generator on a truck—a big 150-horse-power motor and electric generator to provide a cur-

rent that could be taken anywhere the truck could go.

Almost always there was a delay about the start; sometimes one thing, sometimes another. A reflector broken and not yet returned repaired—a property gravestone to be taken along, and late—the everlasting cat gone from its basket. Sometimes five minutes, sometimes fifteen; once in a while a whole beautiful morning lost, representing, say, a loss, or additional expense to the picture, of possibly hundreds of dollars.

Then at last away we would go—a whole young cavalcade of autos, bulging with people and duffle, heads of actors and legs of camera tripods sticking out in every direction—bumping and jouncing along out into the country to our selected "location"—perhaps an old farmhouse, twelve miles out.

For a week or so it is always fascinating; then it gets to be just the usual routine of work, like almost everything else, and the real joy of it is in the ability to keep open-minded for the sight and appreciation of new things—in the enthusiasm of work to be done, and in the

satisfaction of getting good results. Folks standing at the curb to see us start from the hotel probably wished that they too might be journeying off into the open country, with all the glamor of adventure surrounding the expedition—but they knew nothing of the long, long hours of waiting through the day, while the director rehearsed and rehearsed one or two actors in a particular scene, or the whole company just shifted from one foot to the other, hour after hour, ready to be on the job the moment the sun came from behind the passing clouds—if it ever did.

Sometimes, though, there were new and entirely different experiences, as the picture gradually progressed from stage to stage, and scene was added to scene in all the thousands of feet of film sent to the laboratories to be developed and printed.

For instance, for a time I went on ahead, acting as "location man" in advance of the company, as we went from locality to locality where our scenes were to be filmed.

In one little Montana town the only car I could get to take me around for a day was a

"closed" Ford. It was "closed" by having the top and body of a sedan, but all the glass was broken out, including the windshield, and the floor-boards were gone besides, so that you propped your feet on whatever rods came handy, while the road rushed past beneath you, and occasionally tossed a pebble into your lap. The fenders were dilapidated, and the poor little old buggy looked like an utter wreck, but we covered nearly two hundred miles in it before dark, over prairie roads that were hardly more than wheel-ruts through the grass. Twice we ferried across the Yellowstone, and once over the Missouri, before that valiant little wreck of a bus got back to the bleak prairie town, amid all the glory of a marvelous western sunset.

Well, I have been running along this line for a reason.

When an actor comes on the screen, in the early scenes of a photoplay, we look at him without much interest. But if we see him chop wood, or come through a fight, or learn what a time he had selling papers when he was a youngster, we unconsciously begin to get more

interested in him. We like him better. Because we know him better. It is the same in real life. Old friends are the best friends; we know them better.

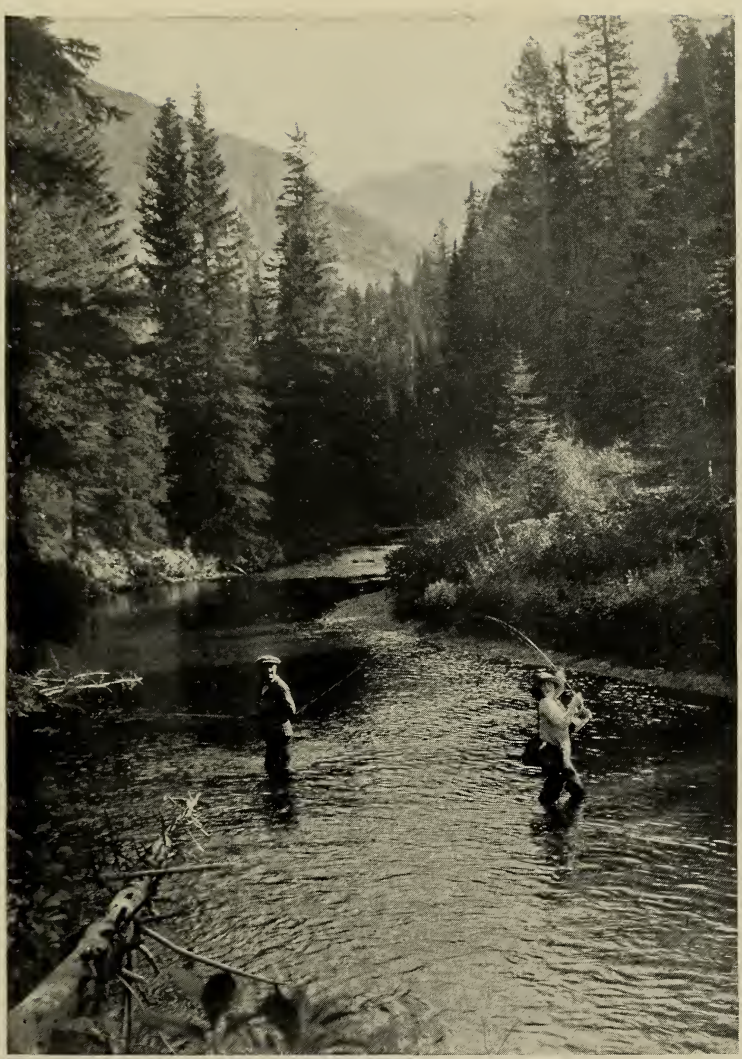
If I were going to school with some new arrival who was sure to be something of a leader, and who was going to have a lot to do with me, and influence me, and whom I might influence in a measure in return, you better believe that the sooner I became really acquainted with him, and liked him, and really knew his weaknesses and disliked them—why, the better it would be for both of us.

That is the way it is with this great new arrival—the motion-picture industry. It is a sort of big newcomer at the school, and we are going to see a lot of it, and be influenced a lot by it, and possibly influence it a bit ourselves, sooner or later.

It is worth while to get better acquainted with it as soon as possible. That is why I've taken you along on this all-forenoon ramble, as it were, through some of the paths of picture-making. And having gone so far, when next you watch a photoplay, you can think of

how many people, doing so many different things, had to take part in the making of that picture, and how many problems they had; and how perhaps they had to stand around, day after day, waiting for the sun to come from behind a cloud at just the right time. And you can notice the clothes the actors wear, and the other properties, and wonder how much of a job the property man had keeping them all straight, and how good he was on his job. And if the film is an unusually good one, and everybody seems to have pulled together particularly well, you can praise it all the more; and if it's poor, you can analyze it, and perhaps decide where the trouble, or part of it, lies.

Then, taken all in all, you'll know motion pictures a little better, and be more interested in them, and like them better, and find they're a little more useful to you, while you're a little closer to the point where you'll be useful to them.



Courtesy W. W. Hodkinson Corporation.

WHERE SCENIC BEAUTY IS REQUIRED.

This scene was taken in Western Montana by a New York company. The way the heroine is handling the rod in this picture betrays the fact she is an actress instead of an expert.

Courtesy W. W. Hodkinson Corporation.

A Proposal on a Mountain Top.

To secure this picture the cameras were carried up to a height of nearly ten thousand feet on horseback. Two cameras were taken to minimize the risk of having to take the hard trip again and make the scene over.

CHAPTER VI

PIONEER DAYS OF THE MOVIES

To understand the movies, and why so many of them are no better than they are, and why and when and how they are improving, we have to know something about motion-picture beginnings. And to understand the beginnings of the movies in the country, in the days when the new experiment began to grow to the proportions of a real industry, we can turn to California.

Not to Hollywood, where so many of the movies are made—but to the Sierras; for in the California gold rush of '49, and the years that followed, we find a strange and vivid parallel.

Bakersfield, California, lies in a great bowl of plain, so vast it seems flat. On one side of the city is the Kern River, with countless oil derricks dotting the prairie-like country and stretching away towards the uplands that rim

the mountains. To the south, the country is highly cultivated, flat as your hand, with beautiful shade-trees, and green fields and irrigation ditches, and growing crops—alfalfa, melons, grains, and fruits. A gray ribbon of asphalt boulevard stretches out from the city, straight as an arrow for some sixteen miles, and then with a single slight angle sixteen miles more, to the mountains towards Los Angeles, where it climbs up into the Tejon Pass. Along this strip of boulevard all the cars in the world seem to be passing; dusty trucks from the desert, the great humming busses of the El Dorado long-distance stage-line, shiny new touring-cars of the city people, mud-stained motors from the trans-continental highways, and innumerable Fords.

Coming into Bakersfield from the south, along that long stretch of straight perfect boulevard, you get the effect of an established civilization equal to that found anywhere on the surface of the earth.

Bakersfield itself, showing some signs still of the young, quick-grown city, is up-to-date, bustling, modern. The oil fields across the

river, with their smoke and grime and activity, testify to the grinding wheels of industry.

But if you go a couple of miles out of the city, following the Kern River upstream toward the distant gulch where it leaves the mountains, you come to the great expanses of rolling plain-like upland, still almost as it was when only the Indians traversed its seemingly aimless footpaths, still as it was when the Spaniards jingled across it to their isolated haciendas, still as it was when the early gold-seekers invaded the country from north and south, in the days of '49.

From Bakersfield you can reach the gold diggings either by going to the nearest mountains direct, or by following up along the Kern River. Once I drove a machine almost to the top of Greenhorn Mountain, that towers some five thousand feet out of the blunt Sierra range that overlooks the plain and the tiny city far below. There, amid the flowers and grasses that carpet the ground beneath black oak and sugar pine, were relics of the old days, when men found gold in every hill.

We visited Greenhorn City—once a bustling

mining camp, but now only a ghost-like street of mossgrown ruins among the trees, with new growth pushing its way through the rotting boards that were once dance hall or cabin, storehouse or saloon.

Near one clearing, half a mile away, was the remnant of a miner's cabin only lately fallen to the ground. The old man who lived there had buried a sack of gold-dust, and later been unable to find it again. For years he lived on at the mountain shack; lonely after the others had gone, searching with a lantern at night for the spot where he had buried his fortune, until his mind was entirely gone.

From Greenhorn we dropped down to the upper Kern River valley, shut in the hills, where we found other rough little towns of bygone days—not yet deserted, because of the valley crops and ranges; Bodfish, Isabella, and Kernville, all much as they were in the years of Bret Harte, when men went mad for California gold.

And now, before comparing the early boom days of the film industry to the rush of a newly discovered gold field, with all its roughness and

lawlessness and glamor and adventure and sudden wealth, let us imagine ourselves, for a moment, in Bodfish, in the early days.

Gold is being panned in nearly every neighboring stream. Mostly, the big "strikes" are being made haphazard, according to who has the best luck. In Foaming Gulch Big Bill, the butcher from Maine, is panning out a dozen ounces a day. From the far-away Bumpus Basin, the other side of the range, come reports of a new bonanza, and several of the boys are pulling up stakes and striking out for Bumpus. No one has ever heard of Bakersfield yet; there is no such place. Nor has any one thought of oil; much less of crops. But Buckeye Flat is already famous, because that is where Razzer Jones, who used to run the National Barber Shop at Altoona, has taken a fortune from the ford of Buckeye Creek. On the other hand, the three sky-pilots, Billy Williams, Goose-eye Toney, and Preacher Wills, have all failed even to find color in Poso Creek, and are thinking of going back to their chosen calling once more.

Easy come, easy go. Big Bill is paying three

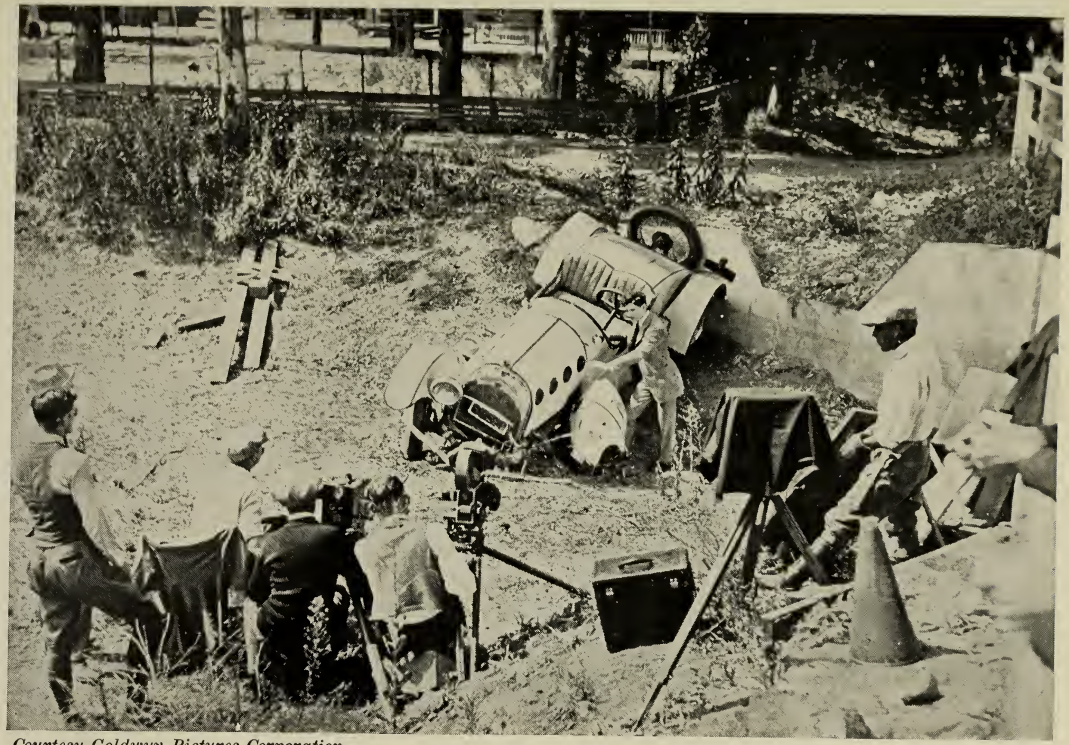
prices for everything he buys, and gambling away nearly all the rest of his dust at the Faro layout in the Buckeye saloon, also far and favorably known as the Life-Saving Station and Thirst Parlor.

It's no unusual thing for the stage to be held up on the River Road, and about every once in so often there's an informal but enthusiastic party among the buckeye-trees on Hang Man's Hill.

Next, let us turn to the beginnings of the motion picture industry. We find the same conditions that made possible sudden wealth and sudden death, hold-ups and hangings in the Kern River valley, seventy-odd years ago.

Impossible? Let us see.—First, who goes to the gold country, anyway, in the first mad rush?

Not the fellows with steady jobs, who have already made good in their own particular field. They have too much at stake. The amateur prospectors are recruited, first of all, from the ranks of those who have everything to gain and little to lose—the rolling stones, the lovers of pure adventure, the gamblers, the fellows



Courtesy Goldwyn Pictures Corporation.

WRECKING A RACING-CAR FOR SPORT.

To smash an expensive automobile for motion-picture purposes is nothing unusual. In this picture, in addition to the two movie cameras, note the "still" camera at the right. "Stills" are usually taken of every important scene.

Courtesy Goldwyn Pictures Corporation.

GETTING A RISKY BIT OF ACTION.

The dust behind the motorcycle indicates the speed at which it was going. The actor, a "professional double" accustomed to taking chances for extra pay, risked his neck in being thrown over the standing car.

with the grub-stake and a thirst for sudden wealth.

This may seem a little rough, when we apply it to the great movie industry, but it is the truth. That is, it is the truth about the movie beginnings, the first years.

For instance, there were a couple of men who did reporting, off and on, for a Los Angeles newspaper. They drifted into motion-picture work when the first studios came into Hollywood—because they had no steady jobs to keep them from trying out this new gamble. But the star reporters and the influential "desk" men on the paper didn't have any time to fool away on the new wildcat schemes. Only within the last few years have they been won over, here and there, by big offers.

The first money to be invested in the movies did not come from banks or bankers, or other leading financiers or investors; for the most part it came from druggists who had just sold out, or dry-goods clerks who had laid aside enough to make a little plunge, or shoe salesmen who had been left a modest fortune by

their Aunt Maria and itched to see it turn to sudden wealth.

The get-rich-quick instinct was at the bottom of most of the early movie money, just as it was in the golden California of Bret Harte.

Why, you may wonder, if all the early movie investment was so foolhardy, were so many fortunes won instead of lost?

The answer is that for the most part they were lost, and always have been, both in the movies and in rushing to new gold fields. One picture cost three-quarters of a million dollars to produce. The money was invested by hundreds of little stockholders, to whom the chance of "getting into the movies on the ground floor" seemed too good to lose. But the company went bankrupt, and the assets, including the film, were bought in for $20,000.

Those losses are the things we rarely hear about. It is the successes that are recounted. Mike Maginnity, who took all his sister's money and started for San Francisco in '49, turned up again, dead broke, ten years later. He had made one or two little strikes, over a half a dozen years, and used the money to pay off

part of the debts he had already run up—perhaps at the Buckeye Saloon. That was all—and we never heard about him.

But we did hear about the big fellows who struck it yellow, and the piles they made. And you may be sure that, as Mr. Kipling says, the tales lost no fat in the telling.

Up to the present time, the producers or "owners" in motion pictures are mostly just the run of little fellows who have happened to land on their feet, and made the most of it.

And, since in making pictures, as in everything else, the final product can be no better than the brains at the top of the organization, we have had to wait for better pictures until, little by little, the movie game assumed greater stability, and began to attract men of larger caliber, with better ideas of just what was really worth while, and what was not.

Don't imagine for a moment that Bodfish or Isabella was ever run as well, or had as good a school or as good streets, or as good houses, or as much real comfort, as your own home town. The best lawyers, and the best school-teachers, and the best carpenters, and the best road

makers, were still in the East. Even the best saloon-keepers, for the most part, had not made the journey. Only the best gamblers, and best prospectors, and some of the best fighters and adventurers, were there.

Just as with the men on the Los Angeles paper, the first writers to leave the comparatively sure living of their chosen branch of work—whether newspaper-reporting or novel-writing, or contributing to magazines—were not the best. Mostly, indeed, far from it. It was the fellow afraid of being squeezed out who was glad of a chance to pick up a few dollars at the new movie game—packing his kit, as it were, and lighting out into the unknown towards the new gold fields.

And as with authors, so with artists.

Photographers were something of an exception, for the motion-picture camera, from the very first, offered more possibilities than did the "still" camera previously used.

Accordingly, photography in the movies has been ahead of all other artistic branches of work; it was the first to reach a comparatively high level. To-day motion picture pho-

tography is uniformly good, and often exceptionally fine, while the writing end of the game, and the editing—in fact, nearly all the other essential branches of film story-telling—are still busy "catching up."

Also, to be sure, the principle did not apply particularly to electricians or carpenters or other laborers, to whom a day's work was a day's work, with a union wage, likely, at whatever odd job it happened to be.

Can you see the results of this El Dorado process of selection? The first to enter the field, good, bad, and indifferent, but mostly a pretty poor average, just as with the gold-seekers, got the experience, and the best jobs, and here and there the big money. When the game developed, and assumed enormous and stable proportions, and attracted the best writers and the best artists and the best editors and all the rest—as it is beginning to do now—they found all the important jobs nailed down. It became a slow, uphill job of displacing experienced mediocrity, the man who could never think or rise above a certain level, with inexperienced excellence—the fellow who

was handicapped by knowing little about motion pictures, and the enmity of the fellow whose job he might eventually get, besides. One *Saturday Evening Post* contributor went around from studio to studio in Southern California at one time, trying to get a job, writing scenarios. He had a chance to cool his heels in little ante-rooms for hours together. Finally he gave up and went back to magazine work. The movie jobs were all taken.

To parallel Big Bill, there is a movie producer here and one there, striking it comparatively rich—spending the money as it comes in; sooner or later, much as he makes, he will probably run out of luck and drop out of the game.

There is a parallel of the three sky-pilots on Poso Flat, in the better class of investors and purchasers and experimenters, who have come into motion pictures with the idea of both improving and "uplifting" them, and eventually lost out. The "League for Better Pictures," and a dozen more. The industry wasn't quite ready for them—and perhaps, too, they were a

little too adventurous themselves, and weren't quite equal to the job they were tackling.

There is even a parallel between the old man who buried his dust and forgot where he hid it, and some of the movie producers. One motion-picture concern was owned by a man who had been a druggist and sold out. He invested the two thousand dollars or so he possessed in making one of the first "Westerns," and in the great sweep of movie good-luck that took good and bad alike to success at certain fortunate periods, saw his $2,000 turn to $20,000. So he invested that again—and so on. Then, as a millionaire, he had to watch his pictures lose money, and his fortune dwindle as unaccountably as the money had come in. He hunted everywhere for new stories and new helpers, and tried this and that—and still his pictures lost money.

The fact is, he did not have the ability to keep up with the procession; soon, in a financial sense, he must die, and the shack that he built fall down and be forgotten.

And there is a parallel between the hold-ups

that marked the wild banditry of the Sierras, and the loose methods of the early movie producers and workers,—stealing a scenario here, selling worthless stock there, and all the rest.

And just as in San Francisco, after the gold fever, the Vigilantes had to come along and try to straighten things out without the old machinery of the law, so recently we have seen the censorship movement, that has tried to make the movies clean up, whether they wanted to or not.

But the most striking parallel of all is in the forgotten towns of the Kern River valley, and the country now opening up and so wonderfully fertile and productive around Bakersfield. The old gold rush is over, for the most part, in the movies as with California and the Klondike. Greenhorn City, the old mining town of the first gold-seekers, is hardly more than a memory—as are the old lurid, unreal movie melodramas of the first years, that drew crowds simply because they showed people and things in motion. Isabella and Bodfish still survive, but nobody pays much attention to them any more. At Bakersfield,

though, oil has been discovered and developed, and the great farming country is at last being really cultivated—just as in the movies the big "better-class" pictures have at last been found to pay more than the old melodramic gold-getters.

We can compare the old-time films, with their impossible situations and their innumerable "stars" to the old gold nuggets and lawless claims of '49; the pictures of Douglas Fairbanks and Griffith, and some of the rest, correspond to the oil development, let us say, of the second period; and the final stage of all, the development of the fertile fields around Bakersfield through good sense and hard work, is even now only just beginning to come to the movies, in the educational field, with scientific films, and films for the schoolrooms, and in the really high-grade product of the new, hard-working, clear-thinking movie producers who are gradually beginning to force their way into the field.

Now-a-days one can talk with the straightforward business-like president of a $300,000 concern just formed to make, after a few ex-

perimental months, educational pictures for classroom use; while Yale University is lending its name and prestige to the production of historical films that will cost $150,000 or more of as honorable dollars as can be found in the whole country.

Yes, in the movies, as in the Sierras, Greenhorn City will soon be hardly more than a memory.

Courtesy Famous Players.

ACTRESS, OR A VICTIM OF AN ACCIDENT?

Scenes in a well-made photoplay, such as this from "Saturday Night," are sometimes almost as realistic as news reels.

Courtesy Universal Pictures Corporation.

GETTING A REAL "THRILLER."

Movie actors are called upon to do many nerve-wracking things. Even though the danger from the approaching locomotive can be reduced by slow-cranking, there is enough left.

CHAPTER VII

WHAT MAKES GOOD PICTURES GOOD

Motion pictures are not yet nearly so good as they ought to be. Not so interesting. Not so funny. Not so artistic.

People who know what they are talking about—teachers and artists and editors and preachers—say so. Indeed, it's an almost self-evident fact.

One of the main reasons is that you and I and the others who watch motion pictures, millions of us every day, don't know enough about them. So we can't demand better pictures, and refuse to make poor ones profitable. Taken by and large, we don't know whether or not the movie stories are well told, or how they are made, or what sort of people make them. We simply go in and watch what appears on the screen, and perhaps wonder whether we really liked it or not. We take

what is set before us, unable to praise or criticise intelligently, because we know so little about the matter.

It is true that whole articles are written about the dresses and automobiles of lovely Lotta Breeze, the popular star, and we see pictures of directors, and actors and even an occasional producer. But that is about all. No real public ability to judge movies accurately has yet been developed.

Almost any teacher can tell you why the *Atlantic Monthly* and *Century* and *Harper's* are better than some of the cheaper magazines; almost any teacher can explain, as well, why the circulation of those magazines is smaller than that of many of their competitors, and why you and I prefer, possibly, stories of the forest or the forecastle. But so far there has been no one to point out what brands of pictures are the best and why they are the best, and where they must be improved, and how it can be done.

We have got to learn—you and I and the rest, now that the movies have come along to claim our time and attention—something about

story-telling, and a lot more about how movies are made, and who makes them.

Fortunately, it is mostly very interesting.

Let us look at some facts about story-telling.

Whenever we watch motion pictures, we see somebody doing something, somewhere.

It may be a young fellow from the country, who has come to the city to make his fortune, and finds work as a truck-driver, hauling piano-boxes that are filled with rifles for shipment to the Soviet. It may be a girl who decided to wake up "Ellum Center" by putting in a real live department store. It may be an old man who sails away to the South Seas to try to locate his runaway grandson, and finds a pearl island as well. But always it is somebody, somewhere, doing something.

Those three things are the foundations on which all story-telling is built. People—the things they do—and the places they do them in. Characters, action, and locale.

It may happen that the people in our picture are merely travelers, looking at strange scenes in Siam. In that case, we call the picture a travelogue; the emphasis is neither on

the people, nor what they do; instead, it is on the place they happen to be—Siam. We watch for elephants or queer bullock-drawn carts and odd houses and think nothing at all about whether or not the lady with the parasol is going to marry the man who feeds the elephant.

Frequently we find more or less conventional heroes or heroines engaged in death-defying feats and adventures, with all the emphasis on what they do, and little enough on what they are. That is the usual trend of melodrama.

More rarely, we find really interesting people—children with a slant of ingenuity that makes the old folks sit up and take notice—a man with a temper that gets him into trouble until he finally manages, when the big test comes, to control it. Such films are usually of the better class.

Mostly, we see a blend of all three things. In "The Three Musketeers" Douglas Fairbanks gives us a little more of characterization than the average hero has (we can feel his wit, his audacity, his resourcefulness and loyalty)

and shows us as well the thrilling episodes of a fast-moving plot, in the alluring setting of romantic France, a century and more ago. In Charles Ray's pictures we find still more of characterization, in a winning personality that usually has humor, modesty, ambition, sincerity, and naturalness; but there is a lot of interest that attaches to his trials and tribulations in the small town where he lives. With Bill Hart we feel real character again—cool courage, restraint, a fine spirit of fair play—and always interesting doings against the fascinating background of the cattle country.

Now it is in the excellencies or defects of these three things—characters, action, and locale—that we find good or poor photoplays.

Don't be afraid that, to learn to be able to tell good pictures when you see them, you have got to watch tiresome pictures. To be really good, photoplays must be interesting. Emerson, I believe, lays down somewhere three rules for reading books—never to read a book that isn't a year old, never to read a book that isn't famous, and never to read a book that you

don't like. With photoplays, we might perhaps say: never go to a photoplay that hasn't somewhere at least a good criticism (that is, real praise from some one you know or whose opinion you can respect), and never go to a photoplay of a kind you don't like. Whether or not it is the kind you like, you can tell by noting the stars, the director, and the producing company or brand.

Well, then, supposing we are going to try to see only photoplays that we can genuinely enjoy—enjoy more than has been the case with most of those we have "just happened" to run into in the past—let us get back to our three main ingredients.

First the people. Because in the end they're the most important of all three. What sort of a chap will we find in a really worth-while movie?

One who, to begin with, is genuine. A regular fellow.

Mostly, photoplays don't have them. If we want to find regular fellows playing the big parts in a picture we have to make up our minds to pass by a large proportion of the

films that come along, except in the pretty big picture-theaters. Actually, the men making photoplays hardly seem to know, as yet, what regular fellows are. In pictures you don't often see the real thing—yet. But it is coming. Every now and then a regular fellow gets on the screen.

In 1921 a preparatory school story, "It's a Great Life," came a little closer than most pictures do to showing what real boys may do or think. And even that was pretty far from the mark in some things.

On the whole, Charles Ray and Bill Hart, and in one way, Douglas Fairbanks, have probably come closer, so far, to showing men who are "regular fellows" than any one else. Will Rogers is another, at least in a good many of his pictures.

Not long ago a picture was turned out that hits the nail right on the head; "Disraeli." It happens that the "regular fellow" in that particular film is an old man, and the story is one that will be enjoyed mostly by rather quiet-minded grown-ups, for it concerns the purchase of the Suez Canal by England, through the

foresight of the great man who was premier of England at the time. It may not be the sort of picture you or I happen to like best; but we must not forget that it is the real thing, and shows what can be done.

Another picture that showed real people was "The Copperhead" released in 1920. It was a tragic story, but exciting, and all the characters, from Abraham Lincoln down, were convincing. "Humoresque" was another.

Whenever you find a picture that has regular fellows in it, whether they are young or old, encourage it. If they have the stamp of genuineness—if they do the things that you or I would do, and think as you or I would think, the people that produced the film are on the right track.

But when, if you stop to think, the old men in the pictures are not natural, and the women are not natural (young girls playing the parts of married women of thirty or forty and so on) and the men and boys are not doing what everyday men and boys would really do, we can classify the picture as a second-rater at the best.

Courtesy Universal Pictures Corporation.

Drama on an Aeroplane.

The use of aeroplanes has become almost commonplace in movies on account of the opportunities they provide for hair-raising stunts. Note that, as usual, there are two cameras on the job.

Courtesy Universal Pictures Corporation

A Gruesome Aeroplane Wreck.

Of course all carefully posed. When "blood" is needed for movie wounds, catsup and glycerine make a great combination.

You may have seen the Charles Ray film called "The Old Swimmin'-hole."

The story concerned schoolboys and schoolgirls; the incidents were taken straight from boyhood in the country, and were at least passably true to life. The scenes were well planned, the photography was beautiful.

But for me, there was one tremendous defect, that marred what would otherwise have been an exceedingly fine film.

It was this: the boys and girls of the story were—oh, say twelve to fifteen years old. Certainly not more. But the actors who took the parts were nearly all of them nearer thirty than fifteen, and showed it.

Now, boys in a swimming-hole, purloining each other's clothes, or ducking to get out of sight of some one hunting for them, and all the rest, may be funny enough, and interesting. But when you see a man doing those same things, it is entirely different. And Charles Ray never at any time in "The Old Swimmin'-hole" looks enough of a boy. The result is, that the film, instead of being a knockout, is "almost" the real thing.

Or take "Little Lord Fauntleroy." It is a fine picture. But Mary Pickford is playing a boy's part—and we are never quite able to forget that she is a girl. Result: the photoplay isn't quite right.

We have a right to insist on reality.

Now, when it comes to what the "regular fellows" of our photoplays (men, women or children, it makes no matter which, so long as they are real flesh-and-blood human beings, with real characteristics to distinguish them from everybody else)—when it comes to what they do, we have the chance to see if they are worth while or not.

If the picture is an out and out fairy story, say like "The Little Princess," or "Rip Van Winkle," or "The Golem," we can take our choice. Occasionally, a Douglas Fairbanks comes along and escapes from thirty-nine bloodthirsty villains by jumping over a house, and we like it because it is pleasing nonsense. But mostly, when photoplay folk do quite impossible things, they might as well "get the hook."

Whether it is scaling precipices that simply

couldn't be scaled, or rising to heights of grandness that never could be risen to, the trouble is the same. For even when watching pure fiction, we want to have it applicable to life. We want to be able to feel that it really might have happened. And whenever we find a movie hero doing something, big or little, that makes us say or feel "O piffle!"—why—out.

Another thing: our movie people must have worth-while thoughts in their heads.

Take a small thing—the men in a picture keeping their hats on in a house, or perhaps failing to stand up when a lady enters the room, or showing poor table manners, such as would not be expected from gentlemen in the class they are pretending to portray.

Or more important things: In "The Affairs of Anatol" a woman steals a pocketbook to pay back money she has taken from her husband, who is treasurer of a church, and the husband accepts it as quite all right, without making any effort at all to find out where his wife got it.

Apparently, in such cases, neither actors nor

directors knew any better—in the one case good manners, in the other, seemingly, good morals.

But we have a right to insist on something better than that. The people who tell our stories must know more about both manners and morals than we do, or they are not worth keeping on as story-tellers.

How long could a teacher unable to speak correct English be kept in a public school?

If the people of our photoplays don't do worth-while, intelligent, convincing things,—out with them.

They do not need to be goody-goodies, either.

Last of all, the place where things happen.

Here, it is plain sailing; we want things artistic if possible—but accurate, anyway.

Suppose a boy started to tell you about a game of tennis, and happened to refer to the solid rubber balls.

When a photoplay shows London streets, with all the traffic going to the right, instead of to the left as it really goes there, we watch a lie.

Once in writing a story about a man who

had been in South Africa I referred to the little kangaroos he had seen there. It was a slip; the man was an Australian, and I had confused the little ground apes or baboons of the veldt with kangaroos, in the queer way that we all have of making mistakes sometimes. Kangaroos grow only in Australia. But what a calling down I got from the editor to whom I sent that story! It was his business to see, among other things, that he protected his readers from just that sort of misrepresentation.

In motion pictures, they have not got quite so far along yet. Near-cowboys are apt to seize the pommel of a saddle with their left hand and climb on any untried horse with it, instead of holding the side of the bridle with the left hand, as they usually do. The movies haven't yet learned that they have a duty of being accurate, and truthful. And we must help them learn that lesson.

To be sure, we may not recognize all the mistakes, or even very many of them; but where we do—put down a black mark. The producer of the picture with that particular lie in it is not playing fair with you.

And now, a final word about how to find the best pictures, and avoid the poorer ones.

First, learn the names of the stars and producers of real ability, who have been in charge of their own pictures so long that we know we can expect pretty good pictures from them. They're not so many altogether; Douglas Fairbanks, D. W. Griffith, Mary Pickford, Bill Hart, Charles Ray, Charlie Chaplin, Maurice Tourneur, Harold Lloyd, Marshall Neilan. Whenever you go to a picture made by any one of those people, you know just about what to expect. Of its kind (and you can pick the kind you like) any of these will give about the best there is.

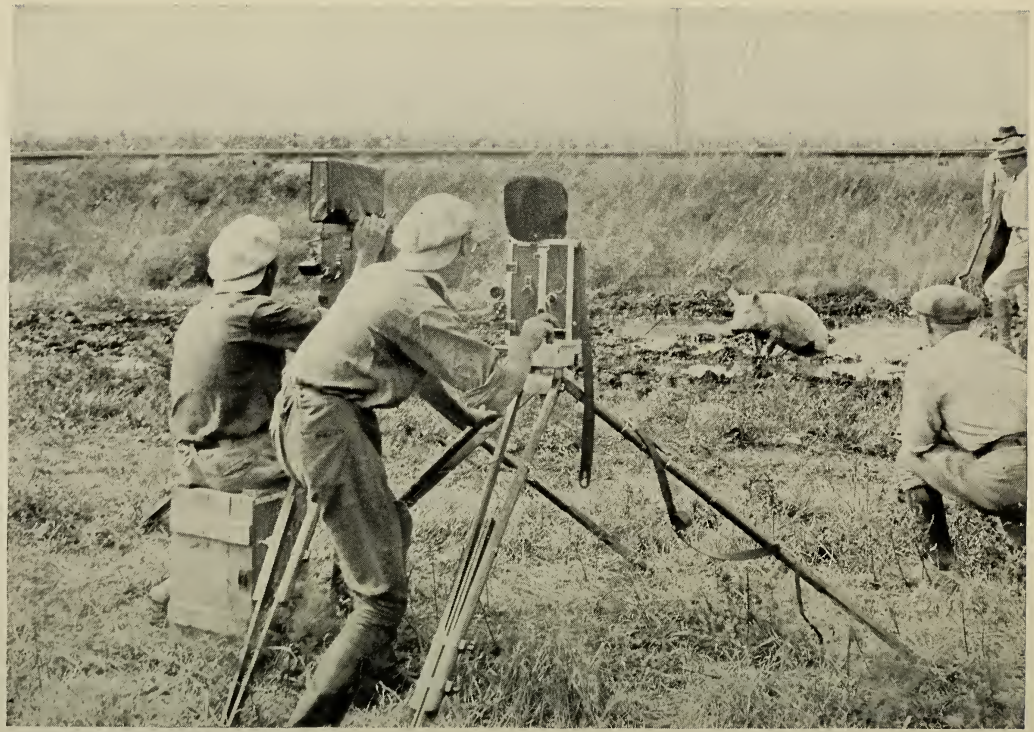
Second, learn to look for praise or criticism of new pictures that are exceptionally good, and whenever you find an unusually strong reason in favor of a picture that seems to be of the kind you like, put it on your list as one you will see.

Don't go to pictures you know nothing about, made by people you know nothing about. The chances are at least five to one that they will not be worth watching.

Courtesy W. W. Hodkinson Corporation.

GOOD TRAINING IN CHEERFULNESS.

Movie actors have to learn how to be good sports under any and all circumstances. They have to be able to grin when told to do so, whether they like what they are doing or not.



Courtesy W. W. Hodkinson Corporation.

Two Cameras Against One Pig.

Animals are nearly always interesting on the screen. They make excellent "actors" because they can never be anything but absolutely natural. This is one reason why dogs and babies nearly always "screen" well.

Third, learn to note the name of the director (or in some cases the star or author or producer) responsible for the picture. Look for the name again.

For instance, among the directors who have become prominent in the last year or so is John Robertson. Go to one of his pictures some time, and see how it proves in all three ways —real people, doing interesting, convincing and worth-while things, in a place that is shown truthfully.

CHAPTER VIII

HOW GOOD CAN A PICTURE BE?

So far we have been concerned mostly with the production of motion pictures—how they are made, and where they are made, and who makes them, and how they happen to be made the way they are. But that is only one part of the business.

There are two other parts of the motion picture industry, just as big, and just as important, as production.

One of them is selling or renting the films to the theater-owners who project them on the screens of their movie-palaces the world over. This is known as the *distributing* end of the business. There are great nation-wide organizations, sometimes embracing a number of associated producing companies, that are formed for the purpose of carrying it on. Each of the dozen or so of these organizations

that together dominate the distributing market spends twenty thousand dollars or so a week in overhead expenses alone; some of them more than double that.

Then there is the *exhibiting* end of the business. That concerns the individual theater-owners who show pictures to us in their theaters, night after night, for ten or twenty cents admission, or maybe fifty cents, or even a dollar.

These two great branches of the industry are neither of them nearly as interesting as the producing end, any more than the book-keeping connected with a big railroad is as interesting as running a train, or even riding on one. But they are so important that together they pretty much dominate the industry, and to a very large extent determine the kind and quality, as well as the quantity, of the pictures that we see.

Accordingly, we shall do well to learn at least enough about them to understand how they work, and how they exert this tremendous influence on the movies, that in turn exert so much influence on us.

It is through learning something about the distributing and exhibiting angles of the motion picture business that we can find out why pictures *can't* be so very much better than they are to-day, under present conditions.

Let us take up the exhibiting end first. In some ways it is the easier to understand.

Suppose you were running a motion-picture theater. How would you buy your films? And if ten or a dozen times as many pictures were available as you could use in your theater, how would you *select* the ones you wanted to use?

There are fifteen thousand or so motion picture exhibitors in this country, and the way in which they answer those two questions has much to do with determining how good the pictures that we see in their theaters can be.

If you were running a motion picture theatre a first necessity, naturally, would be to make money. You would at least have to support yourself. You would of course want to do more than that, to get ahead, and lay aside something for a rainy day, and make your fortune. So it would be of no use for you to run

Courtesy Universal Pictures Corporation.

CARRYING AN ELEPHANT TO A "LOCATION."

Transportation is an item of expense that appears so frequently in motion-picture accounts as to puzzle the uninitiated. This picture gives an idea of the almost inconceivable need for unusual items of transportation when all the varied paraphernalia of a picture company has to be carried miles and miles, day after day.

Courtesy Goldwyn Pictures Corporation.

AN AUTO LOAD OF HORSES.

When horses are used on distant locations, in motion pictures, they're usually hauled to the scene in a motor truck, so that they will be fresh when needed.

pictures unless people came to see them, and paid their admissions to get in. If you showed pictures that only a few people in the community liked, you would soon be playing to an empty house, and be driven out of business. While if you got pictures that were popular, you would have a chance to make money. The more people liked the pictures you showed, the more money you would get.

So here would be your first trouble: *How would you tell which pictures would please your audiences most?*

Maybe your own taste would run to outdoor adventure stories—stories of the Texas border, and range riders, and tales of the Northwest Mounted Police. But if your theater happened to be, let us say, in a factory town where the majority of your patrons were mill-hands, it might be that you would find they did not like "Westerns" half as well as what are usually called "Society" films, which showed millionaires' homes, and Wally-haired heroes who did their best work driving sport-model automobiles. Moreover, you might find that, because your customers actually knew so little

about the home life of American millionaires that they liked to watch, utterly inaccurate "Society dramas" with a strong melodramatic flavor, possibly of the kind known as "Heart interest" would "get across" better, and draw bigger audiences, and make more money for you, than more accurate pictures with less melodramatic "pep" in them. What would you do then?

The average movie exhibitor buys (or more properly rents) his films through what is called a local "Exchange." It gets its name from the fact that films are continually exchanged there—the old ones that have already been run for the new ones that have been rented for the next night or next week.

There may be several different exchanges in the town where the exhibitor goes to do his movie shopping. Indeed, there usually are, for each big distributing company has its own local office or "branch exchange" in every important center throughout the United States—the larger exchanges, covering perhaps a territory of several States, supplying their own smaller branch exchanges in that territory,

and these in turn supplying the still smaller local exchanges, and these supplying the exhibitors direct. Then, in addition to the big distributing companies, there are usually small or "independent" concerns also offering films to the exhibitors—usually of the poorer and cheaper variety.

So, when you came to do your film shopping you would have perhaps a dozen different places to go to, and each of these places would have a whole lot of films for you to choose from.

That is where advertising has come to play such an important part in the film business today. An exhibitor, who gets very likely a good deal of his advance information about films from the trade journal that he has to subscribe to to keep posted about what's what, reads that "Precious Polly" is one of the funnest films that has ever been made. Or that "Saved by an Inch" is sure to make a big hit with any audience. Or that "The Fatal Hour" played to capacity business in a big New York or Chicago theater. In each case he is reading an advertisement—but it influences

him nevertheless. He can't look at *all* the films that are available at the different exchanges; it would be a physical impossibility. So, naturally, he decides to look at the one he has read about, rather than another that he has never heard of. Wouldn't you? And in the end he probably decided to take, even if it isn't very good and doesn't in the least come up to what he had expected from the advertisement—until he had learned to discount everything he read in film advertisements—the film that he has spent an hour looking at, rather than go on hunting, on the slim chance that he might find a better one if he looked long enough. Just as you would in his place.

What is the result? The distributors pay a great deal of money for advertising to sell their films to the exhibitors. Again and again they claim that the new films they are distributing are the best that have ever been made. And a poor film, or possibly a very cheap film, with say a hundred thousand dollars worth of advertising behind it, will do more business, and make more money for the distributor, than a

better film that has only five thousand dollars worth of advertising.

Suppose a picture costs a hundred thousand dollars to produce. The additional prints that have to be made and sent to the different exchanges to supply all the theaters that want to use the picture cost perhaps $20,000 more. Fifty thousand more is spent in a big advertising campaign. For the service of distribution, the distributing company takes thirty-five or forty per cent. of the receipts that come in. The picture has to take in, from exhibitors, *three times what it costs to make it,* before there is a cent of profit for the producer.

Another thing: besides advertising, the distributing companies can reach exhibitors through *salesmen.*

In the small town, or the big city, where you have your theater, we will say, a movie salesman visits you. He is a persuasive talker, and convinces you that if you run the latest film of his company, you will "make a clean-up." So you sign up for it, and pay perhaps a third of the rental in advance.

Naturally, each distributing company tries to get the best salesmen it can, even if it has to pay salaries of hundreds of dollars a week for them. Because a good salesman, selling even a poor picture, may get a lot more money for it for his distributing company than a poor salesman would be able to get for a better picture.

Now let us see how these things work out.

A dozen or more big distributing companies, blanketing the whole country, each trying to sell the pictures it is handling to the greatest possible number of the fifteen thousand exhibitors for the best possible price. Not to the *audiences,* mind you; that is the exhibitors' look-out; the distributors are not trying to sell pictures to the people who sit in rows and look at them—at least, not directly. They are selling them to *exhibitors.*

Along comes a picture producer who has made, perhaps, an excellent picture of ordinary, everyday people just like you and me. Along comes another producer who has made a picture that isn't half so good or as true to life —but it cost more money to make, or it has

Courtesy Assoc. First Nat'l Exhibitors, Inc.

A TÊTE-À-TÊTE WITH A LION.

Note that the lioness is looking not at the actress opposite her, but at the motion-picture camera that annoys her with its clicking.

Courtesy Assoc. First Nat'l Exhibitors, Inc.

ACTING WITH A "TAME" LION.

There is always enough danger in playing "opposite" a lion to make it easy for any actor to "register fear." Note how the lion is baring his teeth.

some spectacular sets in it, or it is based on some novel that had a big sale, or it has a catchy title, or a well-known star, or is made from a popular play. The distributor takes it and *turns the better picture down,* because it will be easier to sell the picture with the "talking points" to the exhibitors! Audiences may not like it as well as they would the other, better picture—but it will be easier to make the exhibitor "bite" on it! See?

There, in a nutshell, is one of the big difficulties that anybody who wants to help along the moving-picture industry, either by making better pictures or by encouraging better pictures, is up against. Between the public on the one side and the big distributors and producers on the other side stand the exhibitors, who must be "sold" on a money-making basis, before any great change can come about.

In the long run, to be sure, audience value counts. In the long run you and Andrew McGinnis and George Lenox and Fuller Westcott have to be satisfied with the pictures you see, or you will quit going to see what your local

exhibitor-man has to offer. But remember, that's *in the long run.*

Now, with this explanation of what a good picture has to overcome to find its way into the movie palaces, let us see how good it can be, and still "get by."

First, it must be good enough to make an impression on the distributors who buy it from the producer and sell it to the movie-theater owners who exhibit it. They must *think,* at least, that it is good. And to make them think that, it has got to have good selling-points such as were suggested a little way back, so that they can brag about it to the exhibitors and make the re-selling or renting of the prints easy.

Second, it must be good enough so that when the exhibitor sees it, he will decide that his audiences will like it—or at least that enough people will like it to more than compensate him for the price he has to pay in rentals.

Third, it must be good enough to satisfy the people who pay to get in to see the show, or they will be apt to stay away next time, so

that in the end the exhibitor will lose money unless he shows better films.

And in each one of these cases it mustn't be *too* good, or at least too good in a "high-brow" sense.

It must have enough popular appeal, so that, collectively, millions of people will like it, in order to make it profitable for the exhibitor, and the distributor, and the producer.

A picture was made in England from a story by Sir James Barrie, who wrote "Sentimental Tommy" and so many other fine books and plays. It was called "The Will." It showed an old firm of lawyers in London, and a young couple that came to the office to be married. There was a "Little black spot" in the character of the young groom—a streak of mean selfishness. Throughout the lifetime of that couple it grew and grew, because it wasn't weeded out, until in the end it made them both very unhappy, and even spoiled all their children's lives. When he was a very old man, the fellow who was married at the beginning of the picture came back to the old lawyer's office

to make his will, and admitted that he had spoiled his life, and the lives of all those about him, through his failures to weed out "The little black spot" in time.

You can see how different that picture is from most of those that you see, month after month, at your nearest movie-house. For one thing, it didn't have any particular love-story, which more people like to see than anything else. For another thing, it has a sort of unhappy ending, which, in this country, relatively few people like to see. So, although the picture was beautifully produced, and although it was interesting as it went along and pointed a big moral quite without being "preachy," no one bought it for this country. It was sent back to England. The distributors, who could have bought it for a song compared to what they have to pay for even the poorest pictures that are made here in America, were afraid of it, because they felt it would be hard to sell to exhibitors, who wouldn't think enough people in their audiences would like it to make it profitable.

Think a moment. Would *you* have liked it,

Courtesy Universal Pictures Corporation.

AN ELEPHANT ON A RAMPAGE.

When animal pictures are being taken there is always a chance for things to go wrong. Animals almost always seem to be irritated by the clicking of the camera.

Courtesy Universal Pictures Corporation.

HUMAN BRAINS AGAINST BRUTE STRENGTH.

Whenever possible, scenes that "go wrong" are turned to account. This entire episode was photographed and eventually used in a "nature" film.

just because it was a worth-while story, beautifully produced? Would you have liked it even though it had no particular love-story, and no thrilling adventure, and no particularly unusual scenes, and did have an unhappy ending? You would have *admired* it, undoubtedly, if you had seen it, and admitted it was good; but you wouldn't have *liked* it particularly.

It was *too good* a picture for the American market, at this stage.

On the other hand, if a picture has certain fundamental points of popular appeal, a romantic love-story or a thrilling climax or a wonderful setting of unusual beauty or charm, and good selling-points as well, such as a famous author or a great star, it can be just as good as anybody is able to make it. Under those circumstances it cannot be too good. Look at the best Griffith pictures, or the best Rex Ingram pictures, or the best pictures that Douglas Fairbanks has made, like "Robin Hood," or the best that Mary Pickford has made, or Charles Chaplin, or Harold Lloyd.

So far, there has been one great stumbling-block in the way of better pictures. It has

even affected such great producers as Griffith and Ingram. They have been afraid of doing the very best they were capable of, for fear of being "too good." They were afraid of being "over the heads" of too many people in the audience. They were afraid of not having enough "popular appeal."

That is why, in "Way Down East" Griffith stooped to cheap "slap-stick" comedy that was really beneath, and incidentally really less funny than, what he might have done. It was why Rex Ingram, in "Turn to the Right" made a picture that was about down to the level of an eight-year-old child, in spite of its beautiful production. It was why such pictures as Universal's "Merry-go-'Round" drop to cheap and overdrawn sentimentality in places, instead of sticking to the real thing.

The danger with distributors and exhibitors as well as producers, is that they are afraid of losing money on pictures that are "too good."

What they are afraid of is a real danger: it is true that pictures may be "too good." That is, not interesting enough in a popular sense, in spite of their artistic excellence.

If only producers and distributors and exhibitors could all get pictures that were just as good as they could possibly be without being "too good," we'd be all right.

It's safer, though, from a money standpoint, to have pictures a little *below* than a little *above* the line that marks the limit of popular appreciation. At least, for a while.

There we have the whole problem of how to get better pictures: daring to keep right on the border line of popular taste, without trying to play too safe by sagging away down below it, in an effort to appeal to greater numbers of people.

There's a curious thing about this problem. Great numbers of people will keep away from pictures that seem to them too "highbrow" to be interesting. But on the other hand, unless pictures are good enough to keep people feeling that they are getting something worthwhile, after a while they will stop going to that kind, also.

Have you ever played tennis with a man you could always beat? If you did, you found that after a while it wasn't half so interesting as

playing with a man who could give you a rattling good game, and whom, if you were at your very best, you *might* beat. For some reason there is a great stimulus in progress; we like to play tennis best with people who are so good that to play with them means continually improving our own game.

Nobody would ever think of going to school if the teachers didn't know more than their pupils. That would be worse than forever playing tennis with a man who could never hope to ever equal your own game.

Do you see what we are getting to? *Leadership!*

Motion pictures, are, in a certain sense, a part of the great publishing business of the United States. They publish stories in picture form. And in those stories they publish ideas, and ideals, and rules of conduct, and good taste, and good sense,—or the lack of all those things.

It is through the publishing business—the movies as well as books or magazines or newspapers—that we get the information and ideals

by which we live. The publishing business is the main channel, aside from schools and conversation and churches, through which we get the information and ideas that enable us to make progress, that enable us to get ahead.

Accordingly, the publishing business—and the movies with the rest—has to have in it the element of *leadership.*

It's as though we were going to school when we go to see motion pictures. In a sense, we are. And just as, if we really were not learning anything there, we wouldn't go to school, so, with motion pictures, if we don't find anything worth while in them, after a while we get tired of them and lose interest, and stop paying money to watch them.

In one year, when motion pictures got too far below the line of popular appreciation, enough people stopped going to them to drop the total box office receipts in the country more than a hundred million dollars.

So, while *for a time* there is more money in playing the public *down* than there is in playing it *up* (since more people come, at first at

least, to see pictures that are too cheap for their taste, than come to see pictures that are a little too good for their taste), *in the long run,* playing the public *up* pays best.

In other words, if the leadership element is present at a motion picture, if it is a picture that is thoroughly worth while, and yet is not too good to "get across," it will both make money and build business, while a cheap sensational picture, though it may make more money than a better film at the time it is released, will in the end lose business for the firm producing it, because *in the long run* it drives away business instead of bringing it in.

When you go to see pictures, look for something worth while. If you find it, particularly in a picture that you like very well, don't be afraid to let the local exhibitor or theater manager in charge of the movie-palace where you saw the show know that you liked it and thought it was good.

That will help him just that much in deciding what kind of pictures his audience likes.

Remember; while a picture must be financially profitable for the producer, and so can't

Courtesy United Artists Corporation.

ONE OF THE BIG SCENES IN "ROBIN HOOD."

While it usually costs an enormous amount to film the so-called big "mob" scenes in elaborate productions, they are often very effective. Notice how well trained the "extras" are here.

Courtesy Assoc. First Nat'l Exhibitors, Inc.

SPENDING MONEY ON A "SPECTACLE."

It used to be thought that "great" pictures could be made by unlimited expenditure in "mob" scenes and "big sets." This scene, however, is from one of the films that helped disprove it; costing nearly half a million, it proved to be a comparative failure.

be above popular appreciation, it still must be good enough to be right at the upper edge of that popular appreciation, and trying to push it always a little bit higher.

CHAPTER IX

AMERICAN MOVIES ABROAD

HAVE you ever happened to think: the world has at last found a universal language?

The men who created Esperanto, or any of the other so-called "universal" languages, little imagined that before their product even reached its twenty-fifth birthday the old world would have unconsciously accepted an entirely new method of interchanging ideas—and that the "new" method would be the oldest language of all. "Say it with pictures."

Long before the Romans began to roam—even before the Athenians settled down in Greece—men talked to each other in pictures. The Eskimos scratched their tales on bone, and the Egyptians carved pictures of eagles and lions into solid rock, and from such crude beginnings, little by little, the various languages evolved.

Now, we have a chance, in a way, to go back to the beginning, without losing the later developments.

The human face is a document that all may read. An expression of sorrow is not confined to any one language. A smile goes round the world. Fear—anger—hope—excitement—can readily be recognized, whether the face that expresses them is white or black, man or woman or child, long or thin, or round and slant-eyed.

A boy laughing in Southern California may make a Hindu in India smile in sympathy, when that laugh appears upon a Bombay screen. Tears are universal. So is a grin.

Motion pictures made in one country may be shown in any other, and find appreciation. Films produced in America may go to all the countries of the world, and do.

But America is not the only country producing motion pictures. French films or German, or Italian, or English, or Scandinavian, or any other, may also be shown in any of the countries of the globe, including America.

To be sure, there are changes that have to

be made, here and there. The leaders or captions—now usually called titles in this country —have to be translated into the required language; sometimes the action in the pictures has to be cut to meet the requirements of differing customs and conventions. And the audiences of the globe do not all like the same things, or see them in the same way.

A missionary returning from one of the island groups in the South Seas recently told me of the first "movie-palace" to be established in his vicinity. "Shows" were given only at irregular intervals, and were talked of for days in advance, and attended like country fairs, by all the villagers able to walk, from miles around.

As the job of translating the titles on the film into the native dialect would be altogether too expensive for such limited audiences, a native interpreter, able to guess at the meaning of the foreign titles here and there, stood in front of the screen and told the story as he imagined it ought to be, as it flickered along. The highly emotional audience was always greatly excited, and the enthusiasm and shouts

of the natives gradually grew louder and louder, as the action progressed, often drowning out altogether the shouted explanations of the interpreter. Not infrequently the excitement grew almost into hysteria, so that it was nothing unusual for the show to wind up in a free-for-all fight.

But the most interesting thing was the attitude of the native audience toward the characters of the photoplay.

Their virtues were not the civilized virtues, nor were their vices those of the film producers, so that they saw the hero as a good-for-nothing, and the villain, often enough, as a hero. When the melodramatic "heavy" pulled out his knife and plunged it into the trusty guard, they cheered him on, and when he next dragged the beautiful heroine into his refuge in the hills by the hair of her head, they were more enthusiastic still. But when the hero appeared on the scene in the nick of time, to help the girl escape and foil the villain's plans, they hissed like good fellows, and nearly broke up the show.

Let us see for a moment just what the world

market in motion pictures means to America.

Not in dollars and cents, because, alone, the money side of the picture industry is neither exceptionally important nor particularly interesting. The film industry is now, I believe, the fifth largest in the country, and its exports and imports run to millions of dollars annually. American pictures for the whole world would mean more dollars coming our way, and more prosperity in this country; but that is neither more nor less than can be said of half a dozen other industries. Money is not the only thing we need to make America the greatest country in the world.

Indirectly, the movies mean more, even from the money standpoint, than the tremendous direct returns from the industry itself give any idea of. The citizens of Rio de Janeiro, let us say, watch American films and become acquainted with the interiors of American rooms, American furniture and all the rest. When they have to furnish a home of their own those Brazilians have to choose, let us say, between German-made furniture and American. If they're already accustomed to the American

designs and styles, through seeing them on the screen, they will take them, unhestitatingly, in preference to the German. For what people have already accepted unconsciously as a standard—what they see others using in countries they look up to—inevitably appeals to them for their own use. And as with furniture, so with all the host of other things American, manufactured for export as well as home use.

The really big thing about American films abroad—in Europe, in Asia, in Africa and South America—is that they carry American ideas, and American ideals and American influence, around the world.

To-day the American girl is known all over the globe. The faces of our screen actresses—Mary Pickford, Constance Talmadge, Lillian Gish, and many more—are watched in Calcutta and Petrograd, Cape Town and Budapest.

Doesn't that make it seem a fortunate thing that Mary Pickford, with her charming smile, has come at least as near as she has to representing the real heart of America—all that is cleanest and kindest and best in us? For, when all is said and done, she more truly, per-

haps, than any other one living person represents America in foreign lands.

And on the other hand, doesn't it seem a pity, and more than a pity—yes, a great misfortune, a terrible calamity—that so many films, made by commercial-minded producers with apparently no spark of the real spirit of service or patriotism, go forth across the face of the world and spread abroad their idiocies, and meannesses, and lack of idealism, and even uncleannesses, as representatives of America?

Think of that, next time you happen to pay money to watch a worthless movie; it may be representing America abroad!

To-day the country that sends its films into foreign lands is leading the thought of the world.

It is probably not too much to say, although the bare thought itself is a staggering one, that to-morrow the country that excels in the production of popular motion pictures will dominate the world.

Fortunately, in the early days of the picture industry in this country there was a man known as David Griffith, who was something of

an actor, a little of a writer, and possessed no small measure of real power as a story-teller.

From the very start, the mechanical and inventive end, as well as the commercial and organization end, of the industry in this country outstripped competition. Combined with Griffith's story-telling ability, this technical supremacy and commercial organization put American films in front of those produced elsewhere.

American movie-palaces mushroomed into existence by the hundreds, and we developed a huge domestic market that made possible extravagant spectacle-productions costing first tens of thousands, then hundreds of thousands of dollars. The name of David Wark Griffith became known all over the world; the supremacy of American films became everywhere acknowledged; pictures from the United States went to every corner of the globe, carrying American prestige and influence, increasing American commercial prosperity and development.

When the World War ended—and though this may seem so exaggerated that it sounds

like a joke, it is not—no little degree of America's influence and predominant position, during the early weeks of the Peace Conference at Paris, was due to the fact that through the preceding decade our pictures had circled the world.

But that is not the end of the story. Since then there has been a big change.

Even Griffith, for that matter, as a leader of American picture-makers, has by no means been universally popular outside this country, although as a whole his pictures have received almost as great acclaim as they have here.

Once, for instance, the popularity of his films induced one of the foreign agents to pay some thousands of dollars for the "Far Eastern" rights on "Intolerance"—including China and Japan. The Chinese did not think much of it, and the distributor lost money. But in Japan the exhibitors were smarter. Having secured the picture "sight unseen" for the Islands, they had to play it to get their money back. But they felt, after seeing it, that possibly their Japanese audiences would not particularly care for it—so they prepared carefully

an exploitation campaign worthy of the best advertising brains in this country. "Intolerance," they said, was at once so artistic that it appealed to the highest intelligence, and so simple that any man of good sense could appreciate it. To fail to be moved by its beauty and artistry would mark anybody as being—well, stupid.

"Intolerance" was a great picture, but it was too long, and too hard to follow, for the average Japanese audience. The Japanese did not really like it any better than the Chinese did, but because of the clever advertising beforehand, each person who was bored by the big foreign film was slow to admit it, because of the fear of labeling himself stupid. Many people praised the picture, whether they liked it or not, to show how wise and clever and cultured and intelligent they were. So "Intolerance" made money in Japan. But then, too many people who had seen it began comparing notes, and found that it really was possible to have what passed for good sense, and yet not like that particular film.

Since nobody likes to be laughed at, there

wasn't any great fuss made about the matter one way or the other, but I am told that the word "Intolerance" has been incorporated into the slang (if we can call it that) of the Japanese language; when a man stretches the truth too far, or tried to "put on too much dog," as they might say in Arizona, his Japanese companions merely smile and perhaps shrug their shoulders a trifle, and murmur "Intolerance."

The fact is, American films, from the very start, have lacked the inner value, the idealism, the spiritual vision and far-sightedness that make for real leadership. The result is that at the present time films from half a dozen countries are competing successfully with ours, and to a considerable extent driving them from the foreign field.

In Germany, after the War started, the making of motion pictures developed as plants might in an enclosed garden. Shut off from the rest of the world, and the influence in particular of American motion-picture methods, Germany developed methods of her own. Chief of all these was the tendency to tell the

story for the sake of the story itself, with a real story-teller, the dramatic author, in full charge of the production. Of course this has not always been the case, nor has it been particularly evident, but on the whole it has meant a great deal. It meant that the author brains, instead of the glorified director brains, or the irresponsible star brains, have been the predominating influence in the pictures.

Over here it has been Charles Ray or Bill Hart, Lasky or Ince, deMille or Neilan. Only comparatively recently, largely through the Goldwyn organization, have authors—Rex Beach, and Mary Roberts Rinehart, and Rupert Hughes, and so on—come into any particular prominence or influence in picture making.

The result of this has been that our films have been too highly commercialized. The making of movies is of necessity very largely a commercial proposition, but here it has been overdone.

Since the very first, Griffith has remained almost the only one of our real story-telling producer-directors who has put individuality

and authorship above the box-office returns. Even he doesn't do it consciously; he tries, I suppose, to make pictures, as all the rest do, that will attract the largest audiences. But he has ideas and prejudices and opinions of his own—the things that make for individuality and leadership—and he would rather lose every dollar he has ever made than give them up.

While abroad the work is commercialized, too, just as ours is, there is a little more vision in it, and in some ways the films are better.

"Gypsy Blood," "Deception," "The Golem," the "Cabinet of Dr. Caligari," "Our Mutual Friend," "Carnival," "I Accuse," "Theodora," "Hamlet," "Peter the Great," and a good many more have made tremendous records for themselves in this country. German, Norwegian, French, Italian, English.

Almost as if in reply, Douglas Fairbanks and Griffith made respectively "Robin Hood" and "Orphans of the Storm." They gave us a good chance to compare our best home product with the foreign-made article.

The Fairbanks and Griffith pictures show that we can at least equal the German and

other foreign films, if we try. Both these American pictures have a pictorial beauty that no foreign picture has ever equaled. The Fairbanks film has a suspense, and the Griffith picture both feeling and excitement, that no picture made outside of this country has ever shown.

So, we can lead the world, if we will. But unfortunately, those two pictures are exceptions. One can name a few more, like "Little Lord Fauntleroy," "Humoresque," and "Over the Hill," that are good enough to hold their own with the best producers elsewhere; but that is about all. The run of our American-made pictures are not good enough, to-day, to deserve world supremacy.

That is something to think about.

The German pictures, as well as those of some of the other foreign countries, have certain qualities, resulting from an unwillingness to compromise with ideals, that allow them, as a class, to outrank ours. For instance, while the Germans desire beauty, just as we do, and would like to have their heroine as beautiful as ours, they also desire a real ability to act. If

they can not have both, they will let the beauty go, and take the real acting. We will not; we let the ability go, and stick to the pretty flappers. Accordingly, in American pictures, our leading actors and actresses are almost always good-looking—and frequently poor at acting.

It is the same about truth, or the sense of reality. We sacrifice convincingness—fidelity to life—truth—to our desire for youth and beauty. If we could have both, well and good; but it is impossible. Accordingly, on the American screen, we see, again and again, our beautiful little flapper friends playing parts that should be taken by older women—not so young and pretty, perhaps, but true to life, instead of childish caricatures of truth.

Even with Griffith's "Orphans of the Storm," we see still another sacrifice of an ideal—one might almost say principle. That is the giving up of historical value, and big things, for excitement, and little things. The French Revolution is a tremendous story in itself; in the foreign made films it is made the backbone of the whole story; in Griffith's film,

it is merely a background, while the "main" story is centered about one or two appealing characters, that mean, except for momentary entertainment, little or nothing. It is a question of Lillian and Dorothy Gish being more important, on this side of the Atlantic, than the French Revolution; but on the other side, when the French Revolution is filmed, it is more important than the great actress who plays in the picture—Pola Negri.

Also, in the mad "run to the rescue" in "Orphans of the Storm," the main dramatic value of the story is sacrificed in order to have the mechanically produced excitement of horses galloping across Paris in time to save the beautiful Lillian from the guillotine. And who leads the headlong, melodramatic dash across the city? Why, Danton himself, leader of the Revolution! That's putting it on pretty thick!

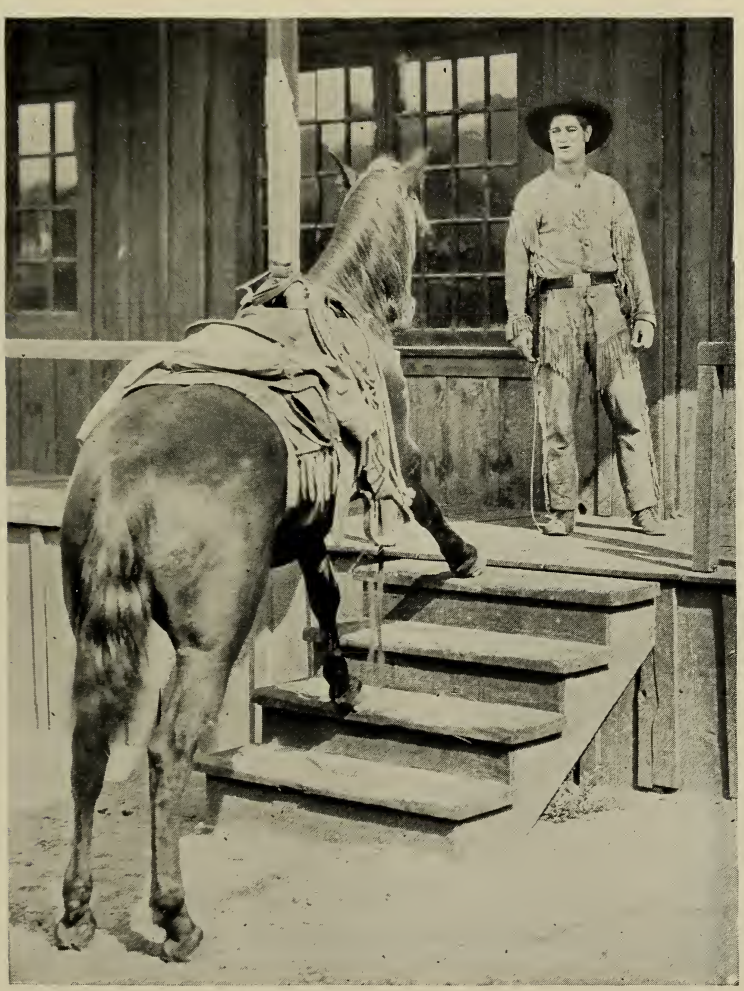
There is the whole trouble with our American pictures: in a single sentence they are willing to sacrifice too much, to "tell a good story." For with our producers the "good story" means really the entertaining or exciting or pretty story, which is in the last analy-

sis the most popular story instead of the really best story.

Roast beef and oatmeal are a better diet, in the long run, than candy. Candy tastes better, perhaps, for the moment, and more people will buy it—but in the end, too much of it makes you sick.

Our American motion-picture producers are specializing on candy, because—for the moment—more people want it. But they're overdoing the thing. If they want to hold the world leadership in movie-making, they must turn out more roast beef.

And we must help them, you and I, by demanding something in pictures besides candy, and in learning to like and applaud the really worth-while films that we can turn out, when they come along.



Courtesy Universal Pictures Corporation.

A "Western" Actor and His Favorite Horse.

Trick horses are always valued by "Western" heroes for cowboy work.

Courtesy Universal Pictures Corporation.

"WESTERNS" ARE ALWAYS POPULAR.

The above scene from a Universal serial of pioneer days helped pave the way for the popularity of such features as "The Covered Wagon."

CHAPTER X

MOVIES OF TO-MORROW

What will the movies be like ten or twenty years from now?

Recently a very beautiful photoplay, made by a famous French director, was brought to New York. It told of two boys and a girl, a foundling, who grew up together on a French farm. One of the boys was a farmer, and the other became a sculptor, and the story concerned their love for the girl, and which of them should marry her—the artist who made beautiful statues, or the farmer, who tilled the soil and produced the crops without which there would be no artists or any one else.

A good many people saw that picture, in private projection-rooms. One New York editor who watched it said it was the most beautiful photoplay he had ever seen. Most of those who saw it were deeply moved by it,

and called it "tremendous." But no motion-picture distributor cared to handle it, or show it to the American public.

The man who represented the producers of the picture, himself a prominent artist and musician, explained why such an exceptionally fine film had gone begging around the New York market for months and months, while infinitely poorer pictures were being released every week. "It's ahead of its time," he said. "Five years from now, such a film will soon become famous."

That is interesting.

If you have been reading these pages about motion pictures carefully, you have probably by this time been impressed with two things: First, that the movies are tremendously important—enormous, fascinating, influential, popular forces, capable of improving, or injuring, our entire American civilization; and second, that in spite of tremendous advances already made, they are still, in the opinion of those who ought to know, far below what they ought to be.

Taken by and large, motion pictures, while

already tremendously powerful, are still amazingly poor.

What are the changes that they will have to undergo, to become really uplifting, instead of perhaps actually degrading, influences in our lives? And what will bring those changes about? What must you and I do, to play our part in bringing about a betterment, and what will that betterment be, when it comes?

The first thing that will make a difference is knowledge. As soon as you and Henry Jones and Dug McSwatty know enough about the movies to avoid going to the picture shows that are not worth seeing—and know how to tell whether or not particular pictures are worth seeing when you see them—the picture makers will give you more of the sort of films you'd really like to see.

That may sound a little like a dog chasing his own tail—but it is not. You and I, and Dug and Henry, in the last analysis, are the bosses of the whole motion-picture industry. The movies are made for us. If we do not like the kind that is shown, the movie people will try to please us by showing another kind.

But with reservations. For there will always be more pictures made than you and Henry and Dug and I—all of us after all representing only one class—can pay for.

There will always be cheap pictures, and poor pictures. They will be made for the fellows—millions of them—who don't know any better.

That means—since before very much longer you and Dug and Henry and I will pay to see better films, that not so many years from now class pictures will be made.

At present, almost every film is made with a dim hope at the back of the producer's mind of pleasing everybody. Or at the very least, of pleasing the greatest possible number. Moving pictures cost so much to make that they have to go, each of them, to hundreds and hundreds of thousands—yes, millions of people, to pay back mere expenses, let alone a profit. But just as soon as certain people, who like a certain kind of picture, know where to find that picture when it appears, and go to it, and pay to get it, pictures will be made for them, and for them alone. Adventure stories, per-

haps, for you and Henry and Dug and me, and sentimental love stories for Minnie Cooty and her friends, and so on.

Just as among the magazines, you find the so-called "highbrow" magazines and reviews, and the romance magazines and the adventure magazines, and the detective or mystery-story magazines, you will be able to find the movies of the kind you want, under the label that will enable you to recognize them. That will be one of the important things—the label.

Suppose for a moment that all the magazines were published in blank white covers, and when you went to a news-stand to buy reading-matter, you had to pick at random, hoping that after you had bought the magazine "sight unseen" you would find it contained the particular type of story or review you wanted!—That is almost the way it is with motion pictures now—except that, because of the queer existing situation, each movie man tries to put into his picture something for everybody; as though the owners of magazines published in blank white covers should try to please grown-ups

and children and boys and college professors and law-students and hoodlums and scientists with a single volume of reading-matter.

As soon as this change comes about—the division of movie audiences into the proper groups or classes—we shall see a big change in the whole industry. Then it will be possible to show such a film as that French peasant story, profitably.

And it will not be long before that change comes; it is on its way already.

Look at Goldwyn, for instance—and Universal, and Metro and Vitagraph.

Universal was one of the first to begin to make distinctly "class" pictures. I don't believe that they even knew quite what they were doing—consciously, I mean. But they began to make good "cheap" pictures, that were distinctly not for the "exclusive" audiences. Their pictures were for the people who wanted clearly "popular" entertainment, as distinguished from "highbrow stuff." The result was that, with honesty and sincere effort, they soon came to occupy a place as leaders, producing thrillers of "Western" action, where cow-

boy heroes would ride up at incredible speed in the final feet of the last reel, and save the lovely heroine with a six-inch gun in each hand. Gunpowder, adventure, excitement, and love—that was the formula, served in large doses for those audiences that were not too particular about the plausibility of their stories, so long as they contained those ingredients.

With Metro and Vitagraph it was more or less the same, with this difference: that they both tried to reach a little higher grade of audiences with their melodramas.

They tried to get on the screen a little more of artistry; the heroine didn't need to be quite so truly good and beautiful, or the hero quite so noble and brave and quick with each of his guns. But after all there was not so much difference, and in some way Universal, perhaps seeing a little more clearly just what they were doing, had something of an advantage.

Later, Metro tried still harder to please more discriminating audiences—with varying results. "The Four Horsemen" is a film of fine qualities, for audiences with a certain kind of grown-up mind. It tells of how a boy from the

Argentine, and his friends and relatives, were drawn into the Great War, and gives a wonderful, complicated picture of human nature, and war, almost as impressive and confusing as life itself. On the other hand, "Turn to the Right," equally well done, and by the same director (Rex Ingram—the name is worth remembering) is almost childish in the way the story is handled, with the crooks and the innocent hero and the girls and the misunderstandings that go to make it all up.

And with Vitagraph, "Black Beauty," one of their most pretentious films from an artistic standpoint, mingles the beautifully told horse story with a brand-new tale of utter melodrama, that the horse is supposed to tell. "Black Beauty" was all right as long as he stuck to his own story; but when he came to telling the story of the human beings around him for Vitagraph, I am not so sure whether he really had good horse sense, or not.

Goldwyn, and Famous Players, and later on, First National, definitely went in for better-class films. With Goldwyn, the effort, while not altogether successful, was so sincere that

it more than once came close to endangering the future of the entire organization, through putting out "class" pictures ahead of their time. "Milestones" is an example of the kind of picture that as yet has not really found its own audiences, and so presented a pretty big problem to its producers from the box-office standpoint. It tells three stories in one, of how, in three successive generations, the young people follow up their own ideas with new inventions, and marry as they want to, before they find themselves growing old and conservative and advising against the very things they made a success of when they were young.

Of the existing companies, Famous Players has done even more to bring along the day of class pictures and divided audiences, and has so far remained far ahead of Goldwyn in the actual number of truly artistic pictures produced.

But let us get a step closer to this business of putting out "better pictures," such as we may expect to have in larger proportion to-morrow. We can do so by noting what particular "better films" have done.

"Humoresque," made by Cosmopolitan Productions, and distributed by Paramount, may fairly be classed as a "better picture." It was also a popular picture. The returns on the film ran to tremendous figures—said to be well over a million dollars. It told the story of a Jewish boy, the idol of his mother's heart, who gave up his opportunities to become a great violinist to enlist when the United States entered the War. People really wanted to see flesh-and-blood characters on the screen, instead of just noble heroes and beautiful heroines. Dug and Henry and I—and likely you, too,—enjoyed the little boy and the little girl and the big little family where on birthdays there "came a meanness" into the house.

"Humoresque" made a big step towards the "better pictures" day that is coming, by showing such queer things as the real-life little slum girl finding a dead cat in an ash-barrel and loving it—because the producers made a big profit on the film.

Wherever better pictures make money, other producers will imitate them; again, that's where it is for you and Henry and Dug and

the rest of us to keep away from poor films and find and pay admission to those we really like.

Another picture: "Broken Blossoms." That was a tragic story of a little girl of the London slums who was befriended by a Chinaman after her brutal father had given her a terrible beating. It ended with almost as many deaths as Hamlet, but it was so beautiful, artistically, that American critics hailed it as the most wonderful movie ever made.

Now, tragedy is never very popular in America. We like to have our stories end at a pleasant turn of the road—an engagement, or a wedding, or a successful culmination of the search for treasure, or what you will,—instead of stopping only when the people of our story finally die, or quarrel, or give up the search for the gold. And because "Broken Blossoms" did not have this popular appeal —the happy ending—Mr. Griffith, who made it, had to take it and exploit and exhibit it himself, in order to secure a hearing—or a "seeing"—for it.

This was the result: The picture was hailed

as so wonderful that millions went to see it, because of its reputation. Of those millions, hundreds of thousands, perhaps, were not able to like it, because it was so tragic. Other movie producers, watching the result, noticed this, so that although the picture helped the movies along artistically, it didn't convert other producers to that sort of effort. "People don't want that sort of stuff," they said in too many instances. "Look at 'Broken Blossoms,'—they really don't want better pictures."

Another famous film was "Over the Hill." That picture helped movies along because it didn't cost much to make—relatively speaking—but brought in as much for the producers as other films costing far more. The story, of a devoted mother who was neglected or abused by all but one of her children when she needed their help and love, was far better than the average movie, and had a big, and healthy, emotional appeal. Any fellow who could watch it without resolving to be better to his own mother would be pretty worthless.

"The Old Nest," another story of the same

Courtesy United Artists Corporation.

ARCHWAY FROM "THE THREE MUSKETEERS."

A high degree of artistry has been reached in the designing of motion-picture sets.

Courtesy Universal Pictures Corporation.

A Mexican Gateway from "Winners of the West."

Simplicity is often the keynote of effectiveness. Here an impressive effect is secured with a minimum of effort.

type, though not quite as appealing, also did well. Such pictures, worth while in themselves, and at the same time profitable, helped along the whole picture industry.

"The Copperhead," on the other hand, and "The World and His Wife," two of the finest films ever distributed by Paramount, did not help things along very much, because being, like "Broken Blossoms," more or less tragic, they failed to find the audiences that might have made them profitable.

A few years from now, when certain brands, names, or concerns have come to have a definite following of audiences that will know what to expect from them, "The Copperhead" or "The World and His Wife" could be distributed, in all probability, with far greater success. "The Copperhead," in particular, a patriotic spy story of the Civil War, with the appeal that it has through the portrayal of Abraham Lincoln, as well as its stirring war setting, would be sure to please—as soon as it could find the right audience, and a big enough one.

This brings us to another point of improve-

ment that will be seen in pictures before long: good films will last longer.

Just such pictures as these mentioned, for instance,—"The Copperhead," "The World and His Wife," "Over the Hill," "Broken Blossoms," and many more, will be watched and welcomed again just as gladly as was Mary Pickford's "Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm" or Griffith's "Birth of a Nation." The day when a good picture will "go" only when it is brand new—only when you and Dug and I have never seen it before, and go to it only because it's new, is almost over. In the long run you and Dug and I—and Henry, too,—have more sense than that. We shall be just as willing to see and enjoy a good picture a second time—perhaps years after we saw it the first time—as we are now willing to re-read a book or story that pleased us immensely.

As an example, take "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court"; any one who enjoyed that whimsical yarn of a Yankee in armor as much as I did will be entirely willing—yes, anxious—to see it again, if it is shown once more, half a dozen years from now.

Never be afraid to go to see a really good film twice; never be afraid to go to see a really good film after it is old or out of date. That will help things along. For the quicker poor photoplays die, the better off we are, and the longer good ones live, the better off we are, too.

Next, to get to another change that will come to the movies very shortly. That is the coming in of a more far-sighted dollar.

Far-sighted dollar? Exactly. At present the dollars invested in movies are mostly very shortsighted. At the very best, we can say they are—well, "smart." They don't look ahead. They take no particular pride in their work. They are not ashamed if they fail to give value received—100 cents of satisfaction for every 100 cents.

Speaking of dollars in this way is entirely correct. For a dollar is an inert thing, that takes on life and movement and power and individuality in accordance with the ideas and ideals and personality of the man who spends or invests it. The selfish dollar is the coin of the purely commercial business man who merely

tries to get as much as he can while giving as little as he can. The intelligent dollar is the dollar of a really intelligent investor, who expends it wisely, and fairly, and in such a way that it will bring him both a sure and an honorable return.

In motion pictures, the average investor, up to the present time, has been either a "sucker" who simply lost his money, or a speculator who took a blind chance, or a "wise guy" who knew the picture business and merely played it for what he could get out of it, with little or no regard for the other fellow, or the public, or American prestige, or anything else that didn't directly affect his own pocketbook. Of course there are exceptions—but after all there are not so very many of them. The dollar of the average American movie producer to-day is still a rather unintelligent dollar.

Up to this time, intelligent dollars have been a little ashamed to go into motion-picture investments, because with so many unintelligent dollars around they were afraid they would be classified the same way. A publisher, for instance, who has had wide magazine experience

and who now runs more than one New York magazine, was recently urged to go into a motion-picture investment "for the good of the movies." He refused, because, he said, he had never stooped to that kind of investment. To him, the movie dollars seemed so selfish, so short-sighted, so unintelligent, that he refused to let his own dollars associate with them.

Every time, though, that your father, or Dug's father, or Henry's father, chances to invest dollars in any motion-picture scheme that turns out better pictures, that pay by being better,—and such investments are now possible every once in a while—the unintelligent dollars in the movies are crowded a little farther along the bench, and the whole industry, and indirectly the whole country, is that much better off.

The time is now close at hand when motion-picture investments will rank much higher than formerly, so that intelligent dollars may come in without losing their self-respect. When the industry is regarded as quite as honorable a field for investment as in the case with, say the newspaper or book-publishing business, we shall have far better pictures.

And finally, the movies are just now on the edge of invading a brand-new field.

When your sons go to college, they will probably watch motion pictures a good deal of the time.

Just as certainly as the books and the magazines and the newspapers followed the invention of the printing-press, educational films will come to replace some of our present methods of study.

Already we have seen the news-reel, and the scenic, depicting the scenes where history is being made to-day, or showing more graphically than any printed words could ever describe it, the rush of water at Niagara Falls, Unconsciously, we are learning geography from those scenic reels right now, more often than not. If you have seen the top of Vesuvius, and the scenes about the top, in motion pictures, you know more about that wonderful old volcano right now than any school-book ever taught you.

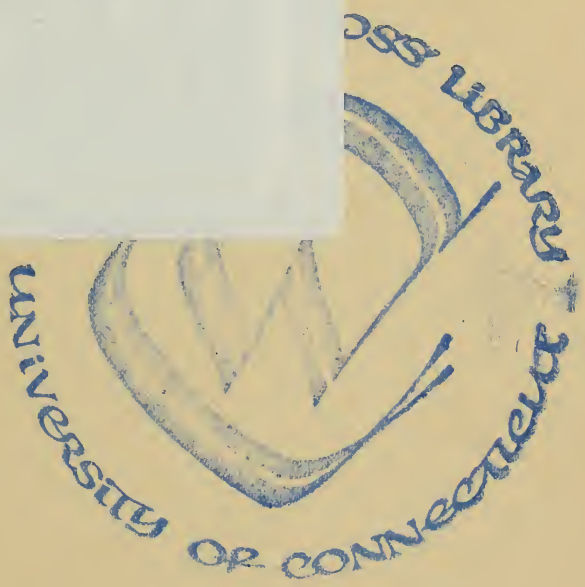
Slow motion pictures show how the tennis-player serves, how the swimmer makes his crawl strokes, how the wrestler gets his hold. Scientific films have shown the circulation of

the blood, with the veins and arteries magnified to a degree that makes them look like brooks, two feet wide, with the pulse-current sending along fresh waves, half a foot high. A camera placed in the best position for observation at a clinic can bring to the screen the most minute detail of a delicate operation performed by the greatest living surgeon—and make that knowledge available for hundreds of thousands of students.

It is through this door, perhaps, this educational door, that the great metamorphosis of the movies will come. For the making of reels that will carry information for students, that will take truth and wisdom to whole generations of scholars, is an honorable and conscientious undertaking. With money profitably invested in motion-picture ventures of this new, and inevitable, kind, the whole motion-picture field will take on a new aspect, and attract the more intelligent dollars, the more honorable dollars, that will in turn gradually lift the character, and the quality, and the products, and the results, of the entire industry.

Well, that brings us to the end of this movie-

talk, that you and I have been having together. If you will do your part, and encourage the best films you can find, and try to keep away from poor ones, you'll help the whole cause of better pictures, that we need so badly, along. I will do mine in trying to *make* better pictures. Together, you and I and the others who want to see better pictures and the others who want to make better pictures, will *get* better pictures.

THE END

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